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East edition No 739

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It's snow joke we don't get white stuff anymore

ONCE upon a time, in the not too distant past, we used to get snow in Kent. Not just little sprinklings, but inches of the stuff which was greeted with whoops of delight by children and the young at heart, and groans from everyone else as transport, schools and services ground to a halt as a consequence.

Today, however, it seems such a weather phenomenon is fast becoming a thing of the past - or at best a once in a few years' experience. We're not quite throwing a festive shrimp on the barbie while strolling around in t-shirts, like our Antipodean cousins, after all, it still manages to turn bone-crackingly cold for months on end, but the snow somehow seems to avoid us.

To compensate for the lack of the white stuff, our transport system, almost as an annual tradition, will ensure that at the first signs of a little sleet, getting across the county is about as quick and easy as a hike up Mount Everest. In a storm.

Add to that, schools under increasing financial pressure will no doubt struggle when the winter cold snap arrives as creaking old boilers struggle against age and lack of maintenance to generate sufficient heat, leading many to have to turn youngsters away. So some children, at least, will still be tickled pink.

Just that despite everyone's best efforts to emulate what it's like, it's not quite the same is it?

If we're going to have the impact of global warming, it seems only fair that we get the snow as well as the freezing conditions.

A few years back we went through a little spate of snow immediately after Christmas; a white blanket offset by the twinkling of festive lights. It really was rather beautiful.

So we'll accept the damp summers and cold springs, but let's not lose the snow too.

Editor **Chris Britcher**

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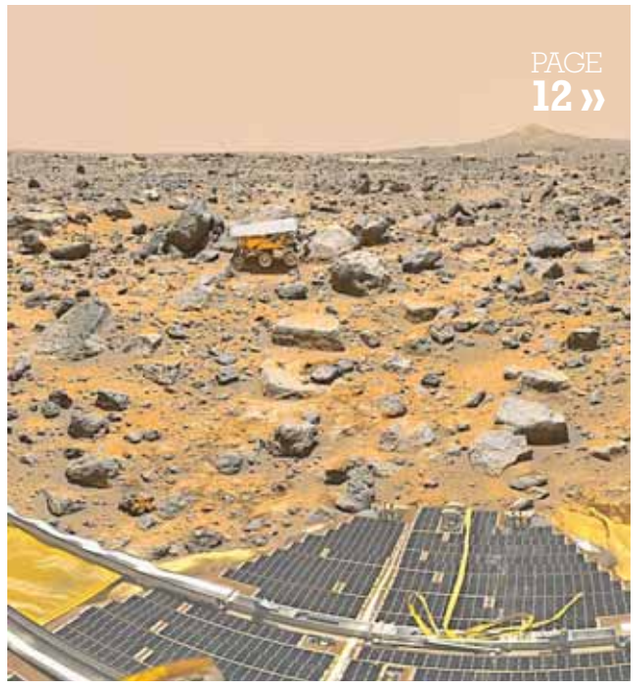

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HOW TO CONTACT US...

Editor: Chris Britcher
Email chris.britcher@archant.co.uk
Address: Kent House, 81 Station Road, Ashford TN23 1PP
Editorial: News: 01233 653475
Sport/Leisure: 01233 653479
Email editorial@kosmedia.co.uk
Advertising:
Jobs/Notices: 01233 653461
Business: 01233 653461
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Stories which made the headlines @kentnews.co.uk during the past week

Fears rise over 327,000 drinking at danger levels

By Chris Britcher
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

EXCESS: It is feared many do not realise they are drinking too much and the impact it can have on their health

FIGURES released this week suggest 327,000 people across Kent are drinking at 'dangerous levels' while the number being admitted to hospital for alcohol related issues is on the rise.

The figure released by Kent County Council (KCC), and coinciding with Alcohol Awareness Week, which concludes on Monday, come with a fresh warning that many drinking too much are doing so without even realising it.

KCC director for public health, Andrew Scott-Clark, said: "People still don't realise how much alcohol they are drinking and the harm it is causing their health in the short and long term. We continue to raise awareness of the recommended drinking levels which are to not regularly exceed more than 14 units a week.

"We know that people struggle with this measure so consider that one pint of strong beer or cider equals three units, as does a large glass (250ml) of wine. A small glass of wine (175ml) amounts to two units while a bottle of beer can mean 1.5 units but these can all vary depending on the alcoholic strength of the drink."

The number of admissions to our hospitals due to alcohol is lower than the England rate (529 people compared with 651 per 100,000) however parts of Kent are causing concern with Canterbury, Dartford and Gravesham higher or similar to the England rate, while the number of men being admitted to hospital continues to be considerably higher than women.

A spokesman for KCC said: "In Kent, it is believed that more than 327,000 people are drinking at dangerous levels which increase their risk of many illnesses and conditions and may well lead to them dying earlier than they should.

"This week has focused on knowing the risks associated with alcohol such as cancer, dementia, depression, diabetes and hypertension.

"Kent hospitals treat approximately 20,000 cases of alcohol related illness and injury a year. Alcohol-related issues cost the NHS in Kent an estimated £108million a year."

Mr Scott-Clark added: "Although the vast majority of people in Kent enjoy drinking alcohol sensibly and within recommended guidelines, there are many who do not realise or are seriously under-estimating how much they drink and the impact it has on so many health conditions."

Police complaints dip while IPCC admits to 'postcode lottery' fears

COMPLAINTS about the police are down 29 per cent on the previous year, new figures have revealed.

The Independent Police Complaints Commission revealed 842 complaints were made in the county in 2015/16 compared with 1,187 in 2014/15.

But an inconsistency across the country as to how complaints are handled has raised concerns. Currently disputes are solved either through a local informal resolution of by referral to the IPCC. But rates for both vary dramatically.

In Kent, 59 per cent of cases were investigated and a quarter dealt with through the local resolution process.

Nationwide, forces uphold only 19 per cent of appeals against their own local investigations, whereas when such appeals come to the IPCC, 41 per cent are upheld.

Kent upheld six out of its 33 investigation appeals – a ratio of 18 per cent, while the IPCC upheld 39 per cent of appeals made about Kent complaint investigations – a total of 26 out of 66.

Chair of the IPCC Dame Anne Owers said: "We know that the police complaints system is over-complex and over-bureaucratic, and that is part of the reason for the inconsistencies between forces. It is very unlikely that the profile of cases among forces varies so widely, so this appears to be a postcode lottery."

Deputy chief constable Paul Brandon said: "We take all complaints seriously and encourage people to contact us if they are concerned with the service they have received.

"Our control room received more than 760,000 calls for police assistance from the public in 2015/16, and there are many tens of thousands of other personal interactions with the public each and every day.

"With the roll out of body worn video cameras to all officers it is hoped this will help resolve complaints with greater ease, and we will see a reduction in the number of malicious complaints received."

County named in 'coolest places to visit' travel guide

KENT has been named the 'coolest county' in England, according to an award-winning travel publishers.

The county was hand-picked in Travel DK's 'where to go' guide for 2017, and has been listed alongside exotic places including Jamaica, Mexico and Sri Lanka.

Listed as the best place to go in May, travel experts cited the growing seaside art scene including Margate's Turner Contemporary and Ramsgate's UpDown and York Street galleries.

Kent was also praised for it's home produced food and drink.

The county's tourism industry showed a sharp rise over the summer, with visits up 18.8 per cent in July alone according to Visit Kent - the biggest increase year on year increase since 2013.

Major probe after stabbing leaves man dead in gym

A MAN found dead at a gym in Bexley run by the kickboxing trainer of TV and movie star Idris Elba, had been stabbed in the chest and abdomen, a post-mortem examination has confirmed.

Police were called to Double K Gym in Stable Lane on Monday morning and the victim – named as 24-year-old George Barker, from South Darenth – died at the scene.

It has sparked a major police investigation, handled by the Met's homicide and major crime command.

Kieran Keddle, head coach at the gym, trained Mr Elba ahead of a professional fight in Thailand last month.

The gym was shut down this week while police carried out an investigation.

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Stories which made the headlines **@kentnews.co.uk** during the past week

Golden boy Max Whitlock opens sports hall

TEAM GB Olympic gold medallist Max Whitlock made a special appearance at a Kent school this week.

The most successful gymnast in UK history – and double gold winner in Rio this summer – was guest of honour at the opening of a new sports facility at the Weald of Kent Grammar School in Tonbridge.

All 1,300 students, along with a number of VIPs, governors and staff, got the chance to see the star show his gold medal ability on the new equipment. He also gave a motivational talks to the pupils.

The facility will provide space for sports, performances and events capable of holding the entire school. It has also provided a home for a number of local community sports clubs for out-of-school hours activities.

Cops hopeful of finally solving 19 year mystery of missing 54-year-old

By Emily King

A FLURRY of calls into the mysterious disappearance of a woman 20 years ago could lead to finally solving the riddle of what happened to her, say police.

Margaret Coston was last seen leaving the former Pembury Hospital, near Tunbridge Wells, on February 23, 1997. She had been treated there as a voluntary inpatient.

The 54-year-old was reported missing by the hospital and was believed to have left the grounds and wandered into nearby woodland, prompting the alarm to be raised.

Despite extensive searches at the time, she was never found.

Earlier this month, police renewed its appeal for information on Mrs Coston, following a periodic review of the case, and are set to conduct searches of the woodland using new techniques to finally provide answers.

It is hoped by using the latest technology and methods, it could finally yield a breakthrough.

MISSING: Margaret Coston

Officers leading the operation also appealed to those who had known Ms Coston to get in touch.

Speaking this week, police inspector Ray Quiller, who is involved in the investigation, said: "We have had a really encouraging response to the appeal, with a number of people who knew Margaret contacting us.

"It has been a long time since the original investigation and so it is important we reassess any details of the original investigation we hold with any new information which may now arise.

"Over the coming weeks we will be speaking to these people to see if there are any new clues, which can help us piece together what may have happened to Margaret all those years ago."

Searches of woodland off Tonbridge Road are set to continue during the week commencing November 21, when officers from the Metropolitan Police will again be assisting the operation by bringing with them specialist detection dogs.

Pembury Hospital was demolished and replaced with the £226 million Tunbridge Wells Hospital at Pembury with work starting in 2008 and the new hospital opening for its first patients in 2011.

CHANGED: Deal is still just Deal

Deal sponsor claim 'a spoof' says councillor

CLAIMS in a national newspaper on Friday that Deal had been renamed for a day in a bizarre commercial sponsorship deal have been slammed as a 'spoof' by council chiefs.

The Daily Telegraph claimed the seaside town was renamed Voucherbox: Home of Deal for 24-hours.

But Deal councillor Mike Eddy said it wasn't as it seemed.

He told KoS: "It's a publicity spoof. It's nothing to do with the town council or local authorities. Voucherbox did try their best to get Deal renamed for a day but the reality is different. The next thing we know Dover will be renamed Starbucks for a day," said Cllr Eddy.

Voucherbox, which offers discount deals in stores, is believed to have agreed a four-figure deal with Deal's chamber of commerce to go towards the Christmas lights

Peter Davies, secretary for Deal and Walmer Chamber of Trade, said: "We didn't see it as a massive problem, and the mayor saw it as a good idea. It's just a few fun, tongue in cheek articles. We took a long, hard vote on it and we spoke to the 150 businesses in Deal.

"At the end of the day it's getting the town's name out and to be honest Deal could do with that, like most small towns could. We're the 'Deal of the moment'."

Athletes to help put youngsters on track

DOUBLE Olympic hero Dame Kelly Holmes, is leading a campaign to get thousands of disadvantaged Kent youngsters into sport and employment by using world class athletes as mentors.

The Hildenborough star's chairty, the Dame Kelly Holmes Trust, will support some 3,750 young people across the county over the next four years in realising the attitudes needed to live a positive life and developing a range of skills.

Dame Kelly said: ''I've seen over the past eight years the truly life changing impact that these programmes have on young lives and I'm really excited that more young people than ever before will benefit from our incredible athlete mentors.''

Nicola Wood, event Manager for Motiv8 Sport, which manages the Get on Track programme in Thanet, said: ''The young people it reaches gain many positive outcomes from this intervention including improved communication skills, experience of teamwork, gaining of confidence and improved health and well-being.''

Jobs threat for 150 at insurance giant

SOME 150 jobs could be moved from Kent to Birmingham after bosses at AXA Insurance admitted difficulties in filling positions in Tunbridge Wells.

The proposed move affects around half the employees in motor customer operations at the insurance firm's Century Place office in the town.

A consultation between the business and the union representing the employees is underway.

A spokesperson said: ''There is a large, existing and well-established motor claims operation in Birmingham and it is proposed that consolidating these teams in one site will ensure that AXA is able to deliver a more consistent service to its customers.

''If adopted, this change would impact around 150 employees.

''It would not affect the other teams based in the same office nor employees of AXA's healthcare business in Tunbridge Wells.

It is understood the proposal isn't about cutting cost, but about having access to a larger pool of potential employees in Birmingham.

MP backs fairer price at petrol pumps call

A KENT MP has backed calls from a campaign group for the introduction of a government watchdog on rising prices at the pumps.

Statistics regularly generated by the Cranbrook-based FairFuelUK campaign claim drivers are being ripped off at the pumps as petrol prices rise and oil prices plummet.

The group says its supporters are incensed by the latest blatant increases in petrol and diesel, that will impact on inflation and growth in the economy.

A spokesman said: ''In the 38 days since Brexit to August 1, wholesale fuel prices fell five per cent, oil dropped 10 per cent yet pump prices hardly moved.

''But in the 11 days between September 27 and October 7, wholesale prices moved up five per cent so pump prices rose almost overnight and are continuing to climb.''

The findings are backed by Charlie Elphicke, the Conservative MP for Dover, who said: ''It's clear drivers are being ripped off by greedy big oil companies and others in the fuel supply chain.''

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Smart card technology to roll out across our train network

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

PAPERLESS commuting will roll into Kent next month as train company Southeastern prepares to introduce a new smart card payment system.

The Key becomes live across the local rail network from December 5, initially for weekly, monthly and annual season tickets, as part of a £5.5 million project.

Posters appeared around the county this week, announcing that the blue smart cards are 'coming soon'.

Images unveiled as part of the campaign show each will be personalised with the holder's name and unique passenger number printed on the front, while child Keys also include a photo on the reverse.

Passengers will buy tickets online or, outside London, from Southeastern ticket vending machines.

Tickets are automatically loaded onto the Key by tapping it onto a smart card reader at their station, either on the automatic ticket barriers or on the vending machine.

Online tickets can be collected two hours after purchase, while tickets bought from machines will be loaded onto the card immediately.

TRACKS: Southeastern passenger can 'tap and go' as of December 5

Southeastern managing director David Statham said: "Our passengers will be able to unlock the benefits of smart, paperless ticketing and speedy, tap-and-go travel.

"The Key will be easier, quicker, sturdier and more secure."

The government's rail minister Paul Maynard added: "Monday morning queues to buy tickets before you board will also be a thing of the past.

"We are making the biggest investment in the railways in Britain since Victorian times.

"By the end of 2018, our aim is for every passenger to have the choice of travelling without a paper ticket, which could mean instead paying with the flick of a card or touch of a mobile phone.

"With technology like this new card we are finally bringing rail travel into the 21st century."

Up to five tickets can be stored on the new smart card at any one time – each must be bought and loaded separately.

Unlike Oyster, The Key does not hold funds or credit.

PCC in crime plan survey last appeal

POLICE and crime commissioner Matthew Scott is urging residents not to miss out on taking part in his survey which will help form his future police and crime plan.

The online survey closes on December 2 and Mr Scott wants those in Medway and Thanet, in particular, to join the 1,000-plus who have already taken part.

Visit www.kent-pcc.gov.uk for details.

Crowdfunding push for town folk festival

ORGANISERS of this year's Tenterden Folk Festival are turning to the increasingly popular fundraising method of crowdfunding to make next year's 25th anniversary event the best yet

They say the move will mean the event, which runs from October 5-8, will not have to hike up ticket prices.

A20 delays this week

MOTORISTS using the A20 at Dover will face disruption when a section is closed between 9pm and 5am from Monday to Friday this week.

The shutdown will affect the coastbound carriageway between the Courtwood junction in Capel and the Limekiln roundabout.

This is to allow work to continue on the Prince of Wales and York Street junctions.

Some days the freezer is far enough to go for something tasty to eat.

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Tories lock horns again over Lower Thames Crossing site

A FRESH war of words has erupted between neighbouring MPs over the site of the Lower Thames Crossing.

Gravesham MP Adam Holloway told the House of Commons proposals for it to be built east of Gravesend would leave it as "a crossing to nowhere".

The Conservative MP argued there is a need to separate regional from long-range traffic in order to alleviate problems at the Dartford Crossing.

He said: "We need, and it is perfectly feasible, a long tunnel that would start south of the A2 and pop out north of the A14, and vice versa, to swallow up the traffic.

"If this money is spent on the crossing to nowhere to the east of Gravesend, people in Dartford and Thurrock will continue to suffer appalling pollution, traffic and inconvenience for decades."

But Dartford MP Gareth Johnson said Mr Holloway's plans would involve "funnelling more traffic into the Dartford area".

He said: "Any road system we put in place at the approach to the existing Dartford crossing would result in at least six years of roadworks and would kill the Thames Gateway area."

Cops receive more than 100 guns in amnesty call

POLICE chiefs have revealed more than 100 guns have been handed in as part of a two-week firearms amnesty.

A total of 104 guns, both replica and live, were surrendered by weapon holders across the county alongside 24 separate surrenders of live ammunition.

The firearms handed in included 29 pistols, 28 shotguns, nine revolvers and six rifles.

The surrender of these unwanted items means that they can be safely disposed of, ruling out the chance of them falling into the wrong hands.

Detective chief superintendent Rob Fordham said: "We are very pleased with the response this amnesty has received and I would like to extend my thanks to all those who handed in their firearms and ammunition.

"We are committed to making our communities safer and removing firearms which are no longer wanted eliminates the risk of them falling into the wrong hands.

"Although this two-week surrender has now finished, we are happy to accept unwanted items from weapon-holders at all times. If there are firearms holders out there who have an item they wish to surrender I advise them to contact 101 for advice, or to arrange collection from an officer from Kent Police.

"The same goes for people in possession of replica firearms. There is never a good reason to be in possession of a replica firearm in public, it can place holders in a significant amount of danger."

Pub wins top loo award

THE Muggleton Inn in Maidstone is feeling flush after winning a 'loo of the year' award.

The Wetherspoons pub was handed a platinum award – the highest possible - for its 'exceptional toilets' in the Loo of the Year Awards which judges quality and standards at sites across the UK.

Bowie show for his 70th

A TRIBUTE concert for Beckenham's David Bowie to mark what would have been his 70th birthday, will take place at the Brixton Academy on January 8.

The show will feature his former band members and the actor Gary Oldman. The performer died in January, aged 69.

Minister unveils 3G pitch

SPORTS minister and local MP Tracey Crouch officially opened the new 3G sports pitch at Chatham's Victory Academy school on Friday afternoon.

The project was made possible thanks to £519,797 grants from the Premier League and FA Facilities Fund.

Vandals smash windows

POLICE in Dartford have launched an appeal for information following reports of stones being used to smash car windows in Darenth Park Avenue.

The incidents were reported last weekend. Witnesses, or anyone with information, is urged to call the appeal line on 01474 366149.

Secrets of mummy are revealed

By Chris Britcher
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

Scientists and historians say initial scans of an Egyptian mummy on display at Maidstone Museum have revealed a "myriad of fascinating findings".

Among them were secrets of ancient Egyptians revealed for the first time – and the realisation that what the museum thought was a mummified hawk, was in fact the remains of a baby.

The mummy, known as Ta-Kush, is believed to be that of a 14-year-old girl who died about 2,700 years ago.

The scans, which have taken place at the Kent Institute of Medicine and Surgery (KIMS) in Maidstone, were given the go-ahead after obtaining a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

"The initial results of Ta-Kush's scan were remarkable," said Samantha Harris, collections manager at Maidstone Museum. "Not only did we find evidence of fully erupted wisdom teeth to help us identify that her age was probably much higher than was first thought, but also that there was evidence of a wedge fracture in one of her vertebrae – a symptom of patients suffering a downward impact such as a fall.

"These findings – as well as others we expect to learn once the full scans are analysed during work at Liverpool John Moores University – have helped us learn so much about Ta-Kush already, and we can't wait to find out more in the coming months.

"Among the other items we analysed was a piece that had initially been classified as 'A mummified hawk with linen and cartonnage, Ptolemaic period (323 BC – 30BC)',

"Following the scans at KIMS Hospital, the remains were in fact revealed to be the mummy of a baby. Initial reviews identified the baby to be a miscarried around the 20-week gestation foetus which, if found to be the case, will be one of the youngest human mummies recorded anywhere in the world.

"Thanks to the CT scanning, we are able to learn much more about the collections in a non-invasive way, without damaging the integrity or condition of the artefacts. For example, without access to the technology, identifying and learning about the baby mummy would've been impossible without causing irreversible damage from unwrapping."

The discovery of the body means that Maidstone Museum no longer has the only human mummy in Kent, but the only two human mummies in the region. Additional research and conservation will be undertaken in order to respect and care for the baby as a person, maintaining the highest standards of ethical responsibility for the preservation of human remains.

HIDDEN: CT scan has lifted the lid on a 3,000-year-old Egyptian mummy on display at Maidstone Museum

Also scanned was an ancient Egyptian ram's horn plugged with mummy linen. Following the CT scan, the horn was found to be filled with contemporary items from the Victorian, or later, era, including a chain/necklace, and buttons. The reason for this remains a mystery, and further research will be undertaken as to why this might have been used as a form of container.

On-going investigations into the life and conservation of Ta-Kush are set to be conducted over the course of the next few months with Liverpool John Moores University analysing the scans and creating a facial reconstruction.

Thanks to the lottery funding, and with support from the Maidstone Museums' Foundation, the Egyptology Department at the British Museum, the Petrie Museum at University College London, Western Ontario University and the Egypt Exploration Society, this research will uncover the stories behind the scanned human and animal remains ready for the redisplay of the wider Ancient Egyptian and Greek World collections, to be unveiled in summer 2017.

Warners: Gunton Hall 5 day Coach Holiday £209

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We'll vote to trigger Brexit, vow county's politicians

Following a legal challenge, MPs look to get a vote ratifying the triggering of Article 50 and our exit from the EU. So which way will our representatives go?

PARLIAMENT: Unless a legal challenge is successful, the vote to start our exit from the EU will be conducted here

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

KENT'S MPs have suggested unanimous support for Brexit were a vote on leaving the European Union to manifest itself within the House of Commons.

It comes after a Supreme Court judge said this week the EU referendum was not legally binding, ahead of the government's appeal against a High Court decision saying parliamentary approval must be sought before triggering Article 50.

While the county's MPs, all of whom are Conservatives, were split in the run up to the referendum on June 23, they appear to have united in wanting to respect the wishes of the 17,410,742 members of the electorate who voted to leave.

Some politicians from Labour, the Liberal Democrats and the Scottish National Party are expected to rebel, but certainly in Kent, it looks as though Theresa May's party line will be toed.

Leave-voting MPs, Gareth Johnson for Dartford, Adam Holloway for Gravesham, Julian Brazier for Canterbury, Craig Mackinlay for South Thanet and Gordon Henderson for Sittingbourne and Sheppey, unsurprisingly, say they would continue to vote in favour of triggering Article 50.

"Who knows what way the government's appeal will go but we are working on the assumption that they may fail," Mr Mackinlay told KoS.

"You can argue what you think the deal will look like, and I'm confident we will be consulted on how that comes forward, but ultimately what was on that ballot paper was a decision on whether or not to invoke Article 50 and the people said they wanted to leave.

"The indications are even a lot of Labour members would support that and we will see how many are brave, or frankly, silly enough to go against the wishes of their constituents.

"I think it will all go through before March."

"I will continue to vote for us to leave the EU," Mr Johnson said.

"It would be an affront to democracy and the will of the people both locally in Dartford and across the country if I were to do otherwise."

Mr Holloway said: "They should do what the British people told them to do – 65 per cent of my constituents voted to leave despite 'Project Fear'.

"The sky has yet to fall in, there is no emergency budget or cuts to public services.

"We just need to get on and leave the EU – those who campaigned to Remain shouldn't rebel against the will of their constituents."

Mr Brazier said: "I campaigned in favour and I don't think we need another vote before it's triggered because we had an overwhelming vote in favour of having a referendum in the first place.

"Hypothetically, were there to be such a vote, parliament would back it overwhelmingly."

Mr Henderson added: "I would certainly vote for it, and I would be surprised if it did not go through fairly comfortably.

"Any MP that votes against it will have a very short political career.

"There will be a minority who will rebel, the Lib Dems for example, and maybe a handful from Labour and a small number of Conservatives, in total I think it will be more than 100 but less than 200."

Even the most passionate Remain campaigners in the county appear to have resigned themselves to defeat, urging their party to come together behind the prime minister and make Brexit a success.

Faversham and Mid Kent's Helen Whately said: "Despite campaigning to Remain I would vote to trigger Article 50 because I absolutely respect the result people have voted for.

"What I have noticed while canvassing around doorsteps is people saying 'most MPs are on the Remain side, they'll vote against it'. But I don't share that view.

"While I can't speak for every colleague the vast majority I have spoken to will vote in favour, and I think it will be an overwhelming majority overall. If you voted for a referendum you should respect the result but there will be some MPs who didn't want a referendum so they may still vote against Brexit."

Tonbridge's Tom Tugendhat said he would also respect the result, adding: "The referendum result was clear and the decision stands. A majority of people voting decided this outcome and it would be wrong to go against the democratic process."

Damian Collins, MP for Folkestone and Hythe who voted to Remain, said: "I will vote to support starting the Brexit negotiations in March, as set out in the timetable given by Theresa May.

"When parliament voted for the referendum to be held, we were asking the British people to decide on whether or not we should leave the EU.

"We must respect their wishes."

Dover's Charlie Elphicke added: "I wouldn't like to speak for other people on what they should do but I would vote for Brexit because it's very clear to see how the people of Dover and Deal voted and it's important for us to get on with it and leave the European Union as soon as possible."

Fellow Remainers Sir Roger Gale and Helen Grant warned any potential rebellion from the back benches could spark a general election.

"Whether they like it or not, more than 50 per cent of the electorate voted to leave," the Thanet North MP said.

"I stated my case clearly that to remain in a reformed European Union would give us economic security.

"But it has been debated by parliament already during the Referendum Act and there was overwhelming support following a very thorough debate.

"If there was a majority vote against the prime minister that would be an issue of lost confidence and a general election would be called but I don't think the turkeys on the Labour bench would vote for Christmas.I'm confident she will win and there won't be more than 80 or 100 voting against it."

Mrs Grant added: "If Mrs May has to legislate then so be it and I will vote with her for the triggering of Article 50. It remains a real possibility if the PM's attempts to drive through the will of the people are frustrated by a defiant few in Westminster, it may trigger a general election.

"Mrs May will then campaign on a Brexit manifesto to give her the mandate she needs to deliver the referendum result and seek a better working majority."

Ashford MP Damian Green declined to confirm how he would vote, saying: "I think we should wait and see what happens at the Supreme Court first - until then, I don't think politicians should answer hypothetical questions.

"I'm a democrat, I campaigned as hard as anyone to Remain but I accept the result of the referendum and we are doing our best to make the best deal for Britain."

Tunbridge Wells' Greg Clark is in the unique position in Kent of having a constituency that overall voted to Remain, as he did himself.

Keeping his cards close to his chest, he told KoS this week: "The British people voted to withdraw from Europe.

"The government is rightly honouring that decision and Article 50 will indeed be triggered in due course."

Tracey Crouch was the only MP not to declare which way she was voting prior to the election.

Asked if she would disclose the information now, she declined: "It's irrelevant. The people have voted for Brexit, I would respect that and I would suggest the majority of MPs would as well."

Rehman Chishti, Kelly Tolhurst and Sir Michael Fallon were contacted for comment several times by KoS this week but failed to respond.

CHOICES: In Kent, only Tunbridge Wells voted to Remain with every other constituency opting to Leave the EU

Mars mission reaches for stars

After a flurry of publicity more than a year ago, just what happened to the plan to colonise the red planet?

A FORMER Beckenham lab technician who has been shortlisted for a one-way trip to colonise Mars has dismissed accusations the controversial mission is doomed to failure or simply a publicity stunt, ***writes Adele Couchman***.

Amid a fresh range of interest in the red planet, after recent attempts to land a probe on its surface, KoS this week looked to see what became of the highly publicised Mars One project – trumpeted in 2012 as being ready to send a manned mission into space by 2022.

That has subsequently been pushed back to 2024 and then further still, amid claims it was all an elaborate publicity stunt.

But those who have been shortlisted for the mission say the scheme is still very much alive.

Alison Rigby, 36, is among the final 100 candidates for the Mars One mission which aims to set up a permanent human settlement on the planet – with the first crew landing by 2027.

The Dutch organised Mars One project has struggled to gain funding for the estimated £4.8billion ($6bn) costs but has since announced it will be listed on the Frankfurt Stock Exchange to enable supporters to 'own' part of the mission.

The privately-funded, non-profit project initially set to raise some of its funds through media exposure – although a reality TV deal with the maker of Big Brother, Endermol, to document their progress has been shelved.

But despite criticism from scientists and those in the aerospace industry of the mission being a "scam" – with one study citing the colonists will die in 68 days – Miss Rigby believes there will be a thriving civilisation on the red planet within a century.

She told KoS this week: "I have always been a scientist at heart. I like to know more about our own world, so an opportunity to live on another planet is one I would definitely take."

Miss Rigby worked in a south-east London secondary school before moving from Bromley to Denmark earlier this year.

"Just because it's something new, people automatically assume it won't work.

"We are talking about complicated systems here and an extremely harsh environment, meaning if anything were to go wrong - we wouldn't have a lot to fall back on.

"Of course I'm terrified. But you have to take that risk. It would be great to say we made it easier for the next people."

As one of the last 100 hopefuls chosen out of 200,000 applicants, Miss Rigby will be facing further selection rounds which will eventually trim the remaining candidates down to 24.

They will receive a formal full-time employment offer to train for the mission to Mars, who will prepare in teams of four.

Only one team of the four members will go on the first mission set to depart in 2026, with the risky journey set to last seven months.

"My family is not happy – my mum thinks Denmark is too far away, so Mars is a completely different situation. They're proud, but I think they're hoping I won't get to the final round of candidates," she said.

Miss Rigby prepared for the trip in 2013 by locking herself in for two weeks with her boyfriend to see how she would cope with the isolation. After failing the first round of applications, the former lab technician's partner also hopes to make the journey to Mars.

"He is very proud of me and very happy that I am staying on the programme.

"He will be upset, and will have to wait before seeing me, but we will make it work."

She added: "I'm sad I will never be able to see my family again. Yet I can't talk to my them where I'm living at the moment in Denmmark, so it will be difficult but it's not impossible.

"The plan is to be put in groups of four where we will train together for 10 years. After all that time, they will become my family."

Former University of Kent student Dr Maggie Lieu was also one of the five British people who made the shortlist of 100 astronauts hoping to leave the earth.

But despite revealing she would like to be first woman to have an alien baby, the 26-year-old pulled out of the project earlier this year.

"If I could go right now, I would," said Miss Lieu, who has signed a disclosure form preventing her revealing why she left the mission.

"Astronomy has always been a passion of mine since a young age, and now I am working at the European Space Agency.

"When Neil Armstrong first landed on the Moon, everyone was watching and it was a huge step for humanity, so it would be great to explore something new."

She added: "I hope it would be something we would be able to achieve, and when I met the Mars One founder he seemed really enthusiastic.

"It would be a great shame if I didn't go ahead."

Yet despite the optimism, University of Kent professor of astronomy Michael Smith said the mission would be "terrible".

He explained: "The project sounds absurd. Getting humans on Mars is a big project - a scale larger than anything we have ever done. The cost of $6bn can't be enough considering satellites can easily cost one or two billion.

"In order to create a habitable place, extract water and grow crops, it would take at least another 20 or 30 years – and be more like $60bn."

Speaking of the seven-month journey, he added: "Getting there wouldn't be a problem, we got to the Moon and people thought that would be too far. But I don't believe it can be one way – we can't just leave someone there suffering."

And once they've landed, the astronomy professor doesn't believe life on Mars would get any better.

"The lack of atmosphere would cause all sorts of problems, like skin and internal cancers. Only living in a sheltered environment could prevent that happening – it wouldn't be very exciting.

"I think most people will be happy when they are not chosen considering they will be missing out on their entire lives here on this planet.

"And for those that do go, in another ten years they would probably want to come back."

Dutch entrepreneur Bas Lansdorp, co-founder of Mars One, said the $6bn budget was enough for the mission as the project does not need a return trip.

He said: "Our cost figure comes from good discussions that we have had with established aerospace companies from around the world.

"They have already been building systems for the International Space Station and for unmanned missions to Mars, which are similar to the ones we need. We are very confident that our budget will be enough."

They refused to elaborate on other aspects of the mission when pushed by KoS.

AMBITIOUS: Dutch company Mars One says they want to send people on a one-way trip to live on Mars by 2027. Picture: Bryan Versteeg and Mars One

FUTURE: Alison Rigby still dreams of a one-way trip to Mars. Main picture of Mars surface: Nasa

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Discovery Park sale prompts fresh focus on airport future

The former Pfizer site in Sandwich has been sold in a multi-million pound deal, potentially generating the funds to allow Manston Airport redevelopment plans to take-off. But opponents have waged a fresh war of words as a result

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

THE row over Manston Airport took yet another turn this week after the site's owners sold their other major venture in Kent.

Chris Musgrave and Trevor Cartner agreed the sale of the Discovery Park business estate in Sandwich on Monday night, in order to focus their attention on developing the Stone Hill Park project on the site of the former airport.

The pair acquired the land in 2012 after pharmaceutical giant Pfizer scaled back its operation in the county.

From a starting point of five companies on site and 15 per cent occupancy, Mr Musgrave and Mr Cartner have overseen the development of Discovery Park into one of Europe's leading science, business and technology parks.

The site now has 65 per cent occupancy and is home to more than 150 companies employing more than 2,400 people across several sectors, with a target to reach 3,000 jobs and 70 per cent occupancy by the end of 2017.

Now though, the owners have sold the site to investment company Discovery Park Estates Ltd – a consortium of around a dozen investors.

It has been trumpeted by many, including Kent County Council, as a great success story, though some critics say the park has not created new jobs, but rather proved an attractive destination for businesses to relocate and take advantage of its enterprise zone status, reaping benefits such as super-fast broadband.

A spokesperson comprehensively dismissed suggestions, first made 18 months ago, that Mr Musgrave and Mr Cartner were in financial difficulty, and insisted the sale was made purely so focus could be turned entirely to the Stone Hill Park project.

Stone Hill Park would see the airport site transformed into resident, commercial and leisure developments.

Ray Mallon told KoS: "Trevor and Chris are regeneration professionals, they take over sites in decline and bring them back around, but now it's time to move on and concentrate on Stone Hill Park.

"There's only so many hours in a day, you can't afford to be spread thin.

"Chris and Trevor have no debts at all, full stop. Suggestions they do are complete folly and nonsensical. Entrepreneurs have to take financial risks, that's the name of the game, but on the balance of probability I don't think there is enough of a risk [to discourage the owners] here.

"We are very confident we can get an outline planning application to do all this – it's business as usual."

Though Discovery Park now has new shareholders, the existing management team, including managing director Paul Barber, finance director Kevin Howes and leasing director Anna Stone, will remain in place to support the new owners.

Mr Barber said: "When the previous investors acquired the site in 2012 it was always the intention that once the business park had moved onto a sound footing they would move on to new ventures.

"The success of the site has been such that we have reached this stage perhaps a year ahead of schedule.

"The consortium heard about Discovery Park, came down and fell in love with the place.

"We never put it on the market, we had a few approaches from people we didn't think were appropriate.

"We wanted people who 'got it' and understood it was special, and when we met these investors we got the right vibe."

Thanet North MP Sir Roger Gale, a long-time campaigner to restore Manston to aviation use, told KoS he rejected suggestions it was another nail in its coffin, and maintained faith in American investment firm RiverOak submitting a development consent order (DCO) for the site.

The Conservative recently vowed to retire as an MP if RiverOak's plans did not stand up to scrutiny, after questions were raised following the publication of council-commissioned report by consultants Avia Solutions, which concluded airport operations at Manston were "very unlikely to be financially viable in the longer term and almost certainly not possible in the period to 2031".

"The so-called Stone Hill Park project is blue-sky planning," Sir Roger said.

"Chris Wells [Ukip leader of Thanet District Council] bought into it and is trying to browbeat his local authority and party members to sign up to a change in the local plan.

"That has not gone through due process, it has not been transparent but rather meetings behind closed doors.

SOLD: The duo behind the Discovery Park site, above, say the sale will allow them to focus fully on their Stone Hill Park plans

"On the one hand you have a very flimsy proposal for alternative development, while RiverOak have made it absolutely plain they are going for a DCO and intend to make a formal submission to the planning inspectorate as soon as soon as they have assembled the relevant evidence.

"Chris Wells has said RiverOak never let the council see the plans, but that's because the council is not trusted by RiverOak.

"My only concern is there could come a time when RiverOak say they've had enough and have other fish to fry. I am delighted they have stuck with this, they have spent a huge amount of money, including £4m on just the DCO process. You don't spend £4m if you are not serious."

Speaking in response to Sir Roger's comments, Cllr Wells told KoS: "As and when RiverOak actually produce a single strand of viability, I, and anyone else interested in airport operations, will be happy to consider it. Until then, they remain dreamers.

"I am not quite sure why trust in the council is such an issue when Sir Roger Gale and his RiverOak playmates tell us they are going to achieve a DCO.

"Given a DCO requires publicly-visible, front-end-loaded plans sooner or later they are going to have to reveal their great secret.

"Until then they cannot expect to be treated with any degree of seriousness."

RiverOak bosses appear to remain confident, despite the developments, with a spokesperson saying: "We would like to congratulate the new owners of Discovery Park and look forward to working closely with them, when Manston reopens as an airport, to create economic opportunity and prosperity for Thanet and the wider east Kent region."

In another twist, it was also revealed this week that City financier Edmund Truell's interest in trying to reinstate Manston as an airport remained.

Mr Truell, a pensions and investment adviser to Boris Johnson during his stint as mayor of London, was behind an expression of interest made to the council earlier this year to become an indemnity partner to launch a compulsory purchase order of the site.

His investment party, backed by sovereign wealth, was reportedly going to approach the owners and negotiate an offer, with the intention of investing as much as £150m.

In an email to a number of big players in the Manston saga, seen by KoS, Mr Truell said: "I and my infrastructure investment team believe that there is a real case for the restoration of airport operations at Manston.

"This is predicated on the assurances we have had from Kent County Council and Thanet that a fast rail link can be established as well as encouragement from the owners that they would

Continued on page 16

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CHANGES: Chris Musgrave, Ray Mallon and Trevor Cartner. Thanet MP Sir Roger Gale, right

Continued from page 15

at least consider an airport rather than a mass housing project.

"Recently, I have had significant interest from far eastern airlines in operating into Manston for long haul flights coming in to the UK in the early morning.

"I would like it put on the record that we are very interested in investing in the new facilities acquired to create a proper long haul destination.

"We will also ensure that we acquire the interest of the current owners at a fair price and have indeed made several proposals to them."

Campaigners fighting to get planes flying again celebrated the comments.

Dr Beau Webber, chairman of the Save Manston Association, said: "This makes it very clear that Manston can have an aviation future, in spite of any opinions in the Avia report, who we believe failed to talk with Edi Truell.

"Given the fact that there is a DCO process underway, SMA believe that the only way this proposal can gain traction is for Edi Truell to join the RiverOak DCO process to turn Manston Airport into what is known as a nationally significant infrastructure project.

"However this proceeds, it is very important proof, with two very rich groups interested in

running aviation at Manston, for the purposes of the Thanet council local plan process, that to close off aviation options too soon for Manston could be a significant mistake."

Sir Roger said it "kicked the bottom out of the Avia Solutions report".

He added: "What is clear is that there are those in addition to RiverOak, at present the only players who have stuck with the airport project, who believe in contradiction to the Wells and Avia line, that the airport is viable."

Cllr Wells, who has come under fire for allegedly reneging on a pre-election promise to reopen Manston as an airport, told KoS: "As the person who dealt with Edi Truell following his withdrawal from soft market testing, I welcome his continued interest and involvement but note that he first has to establish an agreement with the owners of the site and that it's clear from his comments that he would seem to have no interest in working with RiverOak."

However, Mr Mallon told KoS Mr Truell had made no offer to buy the site, nor do the owners have any intention of selling in the future, and played down talk of a "mass housing project", insisting the plans are for a maximum of 2,500 homes.

He said: "Mr Truell is a speculator and representatives of Stone Hill Park met with him this year out of courtesy, as we have done with various other speculators.

"We informed Mr Truell of the extensive work that has been carried out analysing possible futures for this site and the clear conclusion from past history, independent studies and industry experts alike that an airport is not viable.

"Mr Truell did invite Stone Hill Park to become partners with him in developing an airport.

"Stone Hill Park rejected this because the site is not viable as an airport and anyone who invested in such a scheme – whether it was their own cash or other people's pensions – would lose their money.

"If Mr Truell really believes an airport is viable he should have produced the evidence during either of the two CPO procedures or for the recent Avia report.

"The fact that he did not suggests his speculation would not bear up to public scrutiny."

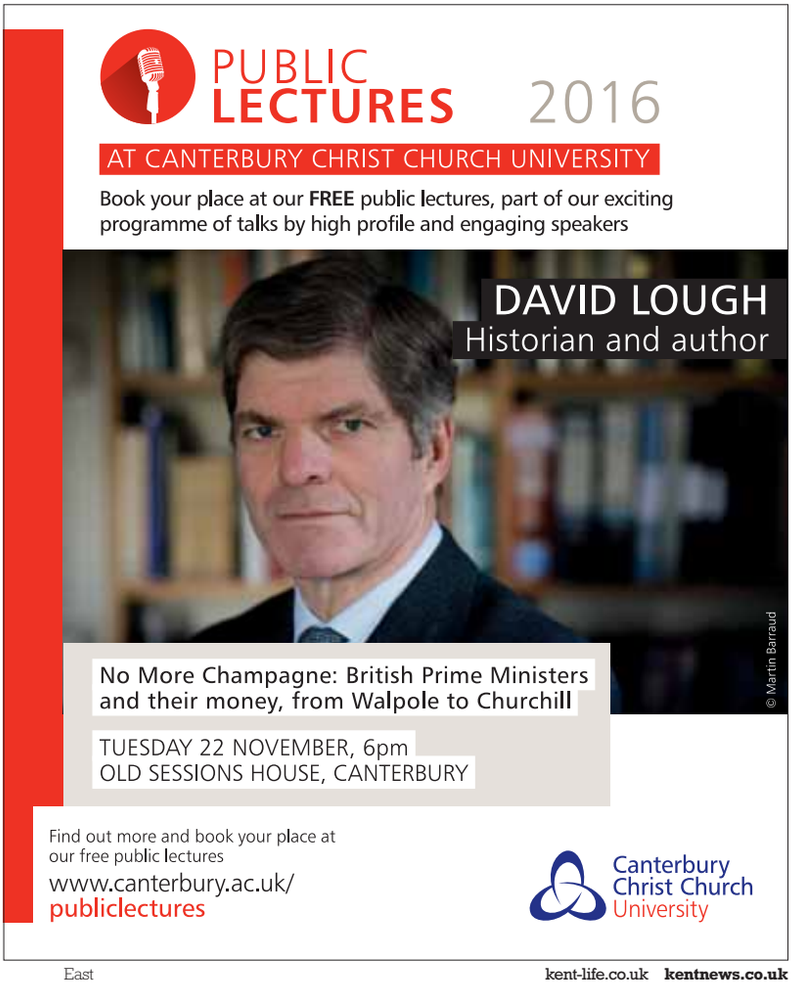
Speaking to the Supporters of Manston Airport campaign group, which has been in contact with Mr Truell for more than a year, he responded to Mr Mallon's comments, saying: "As for being a 'speculator' I am better known as a long term pension investor.

"In my role as adviser on pensions and investments and as chairman of the Strategic Investment Advisory Board, I was asked to investigate the acquisition of Manston Airport and the coordination of investment to develop the airfield into a commercial venture.

"This I have patiently attempted in a non partisan manner, until it became clear that the present owners are determined to turn it into a housing estate and have no intention of reopening it as an airport.

"Within our group, we have fostered the Annuity Infrastructure Club and the team there have made some $68 billion of infrastructure investments, including 14 airports across the world.

"Not exactly 'speculation'".



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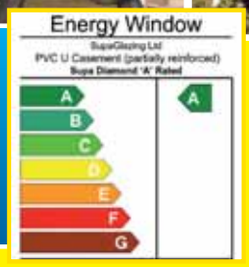

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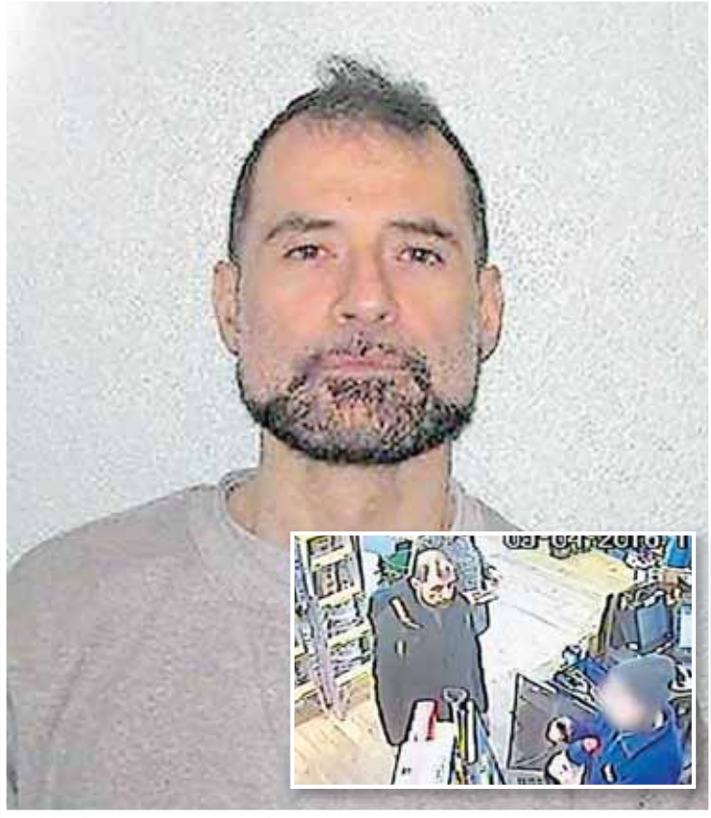
Brizzi 'evil and calculating' as he is found guilty

Stefano Brizzi starts what is likely to be a long jail term for the murder and disposal of a Dartford police officer. **WARNING:** Graphic detail is included in this report



KILLER: Main image Stefano Brizzi, inset he is seen buying chemicals in bid to get ride of PC Semple's body. Left, police at the scene after the remains were discovered

A FAN of TV drama Breaking Bad who strangled a police officer during a bondage sex session and tried to dispose of the body in an acid bath was this week convicted of murder.

Stefano Brizzi, 50, admitted he was inspired by his favourite TV series as he tried to get away with killing 59-year-old PC Gordon Semple, from Greenhithe near Dartford, by dissolving his flesh.

Following an Old Bailey trial, the former Morgan Stanley IT developer was found guilty of murder by a majority of 10 to two after the jury had deliberated for more than 30 hours.

Brizzi, who gave no reaction as the jury delivered its verdict, will be sentenced on December 9.

The court heard how the defendant met his victim on gay dating app Grindr and arranged a "hot dirty sleazy session" at his flat near London's Tate Modern gallery on April 1.

According to Brizzi, PC Semple died when a dog leash he had been wearing as part of a sex game slipped.

But a pathologist concluded that while strangulation was a possible cause of death, it would have taken minutes rather than moments, as the defendant had claimed.

In the days after the killing, crystal meth addict Brizzi was caught on CCTV buying buckets, a perforated metal sheet and cleaning products from a DIY store. He then set about dismembering the body and stripping the flesh.

Meanwhile, PC Semple's long-term partner Gary Meeks raised the alarm and reported him missing when he failed to return to their home.

Neighbours complained about the stench coming from Brizzi's flat and eventually called police who came across the grisly sight of "globules" of flesh floating in the bath, bags containing bones and a part of PC Semple's head, and pools of human fat in the oven.

Brizzi, who was wearing pink underpants and sunglasses, was arrested as officers realised the enormity of what they had found.

The court heard there was evidence in the kitchen that Brizzi had chopped up the Inverness-born officer with a variety of utensils and may have even used chopsticks to eat morsels of cooked meat.

Following his arrest, Brizzi admitted killing and trying to dissolve the body of a policeman because "Satan told me to".

During the killing, he said he had turned away a man on his doorstep who had arrived for a sex party organised on Grindr.

Brizzi said: "I was right in the middle of strangling Gordon and I said to him 'Look, this is not the right time now, people are falling ill and it's a mess'."

The Italian also told police that he had "chucked" some of PC Semple's body into the Thames and thrown away his police badge and belongings.

A human foot was later found by a member of Thames Mudlark Club near Bermondsey Wall.

The court heard that Brizzi was addicted to crystal meth, which had cost him his job at financial giant Morgan Stanley.

He had gone to Crystal Meth Anonymous meetings, but upset people by wearing a Breaking Bad T-shirt as the show "glorified" the drug.

In his home, police found a mask and dog leash with PC Semple's DNA on it as well as a copy of the Satanic Bible.

Giving evidence, Brizzi, who has HIV, told jurors of the difficulties of being a gay man brought up in a religious Italian family. The youngest of three siblings, his Tuscan father was a civil servant and his uncle was a Catholic priest.

He had earlier admitted a charge of obstructing a coroner by disposing of the body. PC Semple's brain and other internal organs have never been found.

PC Semple's family said in a statement: "Gordon was a loyal and much loved long term partner, brother, brother in law, uncle, cousin and friend to all.

"We were devastated when the news broke of Gordon's murder and the circumstances which are still incredibly hard to deal with. It is still insurmountably upsetting.

"At Gordon's funeral we met many of his friends and work colleagues – we were proud to hear how fondly they thought of Gordon."

Malcolm McHaffie, deputy chief crown prosecutor, said: "Stefano Brizzi is an evil and calculating man who intentionally killed Gordon Semple and then made gruesome attempts to dispose of his body.

"He cynically lied to the court and the jury claiming that Mr Semple's tragic death was caused when a sex game went horribly wrong and that he had taken drugs which caused him to try to cover up the death.

"This was all fabricated by Brizzi to evade justice."

DARK WORLD BEHIND THE SMILES

PC Gordon Semple, pictured right, enjoyed a comfortable home life, spending evenings watching television with his long-term partner or socialising in their local pub.

But it seems that alongside his "happy-go-lucky" appearance, the officer harboured dark sexual fantasies which ended in tragedy inside the flat of sadomasochist Stefano Brizzi.

PC Semple, 59, was originally from Inverness before joining the Metropolitan Police, where he served for 30 years.

At the time of his death, PC Semple was stationed at Westminster City Hall in Victoria as part of an anti-social behaviour team working closely with the council.

The Old Bailey heard that the officer was "promiscuous" and had cheated on Gary Meeks, his partner of 25 years.

PC Semple's friend Jeff Green described him as a "lovely good man".

He said: "Outside work, we were good drinking partners. We were buddies. He became a friend of the family for many years. He was just a mate really."

None of PC Semple's family attended court to hear of the harrowing and grisly details of his death and subsequent dismemberment. But following his missing person appeal, his brother Ronnie thanked people for their "kind thoughts" on behalf of the family.

Mum-of-two beats the odds in 100km trek across Sahara

Told she would never be able to walk again, Luisa Pearce refuses to give up

By Adele Couchman
adele.couchman@archant.co.uk

TWO years ago, Luisa Pearce was told she would never walk again. Now she is waiting to see if she has set a new world record for the fastest crossing of the Sahara Desert.

And she managed the remarkable feat in a wheelchair – and when that broke, hobbled across the finish line on crutches.

The mother-of-two, from Staplehurst, flew back into the country after her remarkable achievement last Sunday, and this week was reflecting on the 100km trek and how far she had come since routine wrist surgery went wrong and she woke up paralysed on her left side.

Speaking to KoS about the trip, which involved her crawling up the highest sand dune in Morocco, the former special needs teacher said: "The trip was about showing how disability is not inability.

"There were certainly high and low moments where I was freezing cold and soaking wet. There were parts of the trek where I couldn't use my wheelchair, and I had people holding my arms where I had to climb.

"The best moment was sitting on top of Erg Zahar watching the sun set with my son Christian next to me, who was really proud."

The 47-year-old helped raise thousands of pounds for her charity Freedom for Wheels as part of the charity trek.

She added: "I wanted to show to disabled people that with the right support behind you, you can achieve anything."

Despite the devastating news she received after her operation she was able to train for eight hours a week in preparation for the trek – which involved going to the gym and practising using her wheelchair on Camber Sands beach in East Sussex.

A self-confessed adrenaline junkie, Mrs Pearce decided she needed a new challenge after she was unable to go ahead with a climb to Mount Kilimanjaro she planned before her wrist operation.

PROBLEM: When the wheelchair packed up, Mrs Pearce used crutches

"I've always been adventurous, but when you become disabled so many things are taken away from you. Wheels and sand do not go together, but I wanted to prove everyone wrong," she said.

Arriving back in the UK last Sunday, the challenge lasted for seven days with Mrs Pearce and her 18 strong team enduring 40 degree heat, sandstorms, thunder and lightning and sub temperatures at night.

"There were no toilets, showers or washing facilities and we had to put the tent up in the pitch black," she recalls. "My wheelchair was battered going through the desert, so eventually I had to use my crutches.

"Without working as a team we would have never made it through."

Mrs Pearce was left paralysed from the knee down in one leg and lost the use of her left hand after surgery on her wrist in 2014.

It is thought she suffered from an autoimmune disorder, leading her body to attack healthy tissue, but the cause continues to baffle doctors.

"When I woke up from my surgery, I knew something wasn't quite right," explained the former special needs teacher.

"Five weeks later I was paralysed down the left side of my body.

"I've still had no diagnosis and have seen over 26 consultants. I'm not the sort of person to lie down and accept things and I will keep fighting."

But her recovery earlier this year saw her begin using crutches – defying the doctors who believed she would never walk.

Among those who joined Mrs Peace

CLIMB: Brave fundraiser is helped to climb up the sand dune in the desert

on the Sahara Desert challenge was her physiotherapist Richard Kendall and members of the David Lloyd Kings Hill gym in West Malling who helped with her recovery.

Mr Kendall, 31, has been working with Mrs Pearce numerous times a week after she became paralysed.

He said: "It was tough but it was amazing. What we achieved as a team was unbelievable and I can't praise Luisa enough for how she bounced back everyday during the trek.

"It was harder for her physically as she changed from the wheelchair to her crutches, and at the end of the trip her hands were wrapped up like boxing gloves with all the blisters and sores."

He added: "The first year after the surgery Luisa wasn't able to walk and was restricted to her wheelchair. A lot of people would have just accepted, but Luisa has fought and has given herself a choice to walk. At the gym I rarely see her in her wheelchair, which is so rewarding to see.

"She has managed to get to that point to show she can achieve and prove to disabled people you can do what you want to do with the right support behind you.

"Getting to the top of that sand dune was really emotional and it's a moment I will never forget."

Mrs Pearce's son Christian Brooks, who is studying his A levels at Cranbrook School, said: "A few weeks after the operation, mum thought she couldn't be trapped and needed to do something.

"I could never feel more proud as her son and I can't put into words what an inspirational human being she is.

"When we reached the exact top of Erg Zahar, mum just collapsed into emotion."

So far, the seven-day challenge has raised £25,000 – half of the £50,000 target which will go towards Freedom for Wheels, a charity Mrs Pearce set up to help people in Kent cope with the cost of mobility equipment.

She said: "I knew I wanted to raise money for a charity so I thought I needed to come up with a crazy idea.

"Specialist equipment is extremely expensive, and when you're disabled you're basically told to stay indoors until you can afford a wheelchair.

"I was in a fortunate enough position where I could afford my equipment, but the devastation of those who can't must be huge."

She added: "I've been incredibly lucky to have an inspirational team behind my rehab that has allowed me to achieve the impossible and wish to offer, through this charity, the same opportunities and experiences to others."

■ To donate, visit the website www.freedomforwheels.co.uk.

Farage: I'll fly the flag with Donald Trump

South east MEP Nigel Farage has been jostling for position to be the go-between for Theresa May and the president-elect

By Andrew Woodcock
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

NIGEL Farage has accused Downing Street of allowing "petty party politics" to get in the way of the national interest, after he was given the cold shoulder over his offer to act as a go-between with US president-elect Donald Trump.

Number 10 dismissed suggestions this week that the Ukip leader, who lives in Westerham, might become the "third person" in the relationship between Mr Trump and prime minister Theresa May, insisting the government already has "well-established" channels of communication.

Mr Farage scored a huge political coup in becoming the first British politician to meet Mr Trump after his election victory when he flew to New York last weekend, and said he was ready to play a "constructive" role in fostering close UK relations with the new regime at the White House.

But Mrs May's official spokeswoman pointed out the prime minister has already had a phone conversation with Mr Trump, in which he invited her to visit Washington at the earliest opportunity and voiced his hopes of striking up a relationship comparable to that between Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher.

"The president-elect talked about enjoying the same relationship Reagan and Thatcher did," said the spokeswoman. "I don't remember there being any third person in that relationship."

In response, Mr Farage said: "It just amazes me that those ghastly little apparatchiks that work in Downing Street put out statements like this. It just goes to show they are not really interested in the country or the national interest, they are more concerned about petty party politics and trying to keep me out of everything.

"If you think of America in terms of a business and think of them as a client we want to do business with. What would you do? You would use the person who has the connections. Nobody in this administration in the UK has any connections with the Trump team at all, and yet they are prepared on behalf of the country to cut off their noses to spite their faces."

Mr Farage, who spent around an hour with the president-elect in his Trump Tower home in New York, said he had only gone to the US to meet "old friends" in the politician's team and did not expect to meet Mr Trump himself.

However, he was quick to ensure a photograph of the two smiling broadly was released. Mr Farage had appeared at a campaign rally for Mr Trump in the campaign which led to his remarkable victory against Hillary Clinton earlier this month.

However, Conservative former defence minister Sir Gerald Howarth said it was "not sensible" to ignore Mr Farage, and the May administration should "think out of the box" about their relations with Washington.

"If Nigel Farage is well-connected with Donald Trump – as it would appear that he is – then we should certainly be talking to him," Sir Gerald said. "I am not suggesting a formal role for him but I certainly do think it is worth talking to him."

Pressed over whether Mrs May saw a role for Mr Farage, the PM's official spokeswoman said: "We have established routes of engagement with the president-elect and his team. Our diplomatic staff have been building those contacts and links in the run-up to the election. Relations between the two teams are working well."

And she brushed off suggestions that ministers could be briefed by Mr Farage on his meeting. She said: "It seems to me that there are pretty widespread reports of his visit to Trump, so I'm not sure they need to

SMILES: Nigel Farage meets Donald Trump last weekend - the first British politician to meet him following his incredible election success

speak to him– they could just read the British press."

Mr Farage said the election of Mr Trump represented a "fantastic opportunity" for the UK which could give it extra clout in Brexit negotiations under Article 50 of the EU treaties. He steps down as Ukip leader this month.

JANICE ATKINSON: TRUMP WIN WILL BE REPEATED IN EUROPE

FORMER Ukip MEP Janice Atkinson, now serving as an independent, writes for KoS on her experience in New York as Donald Trump romped to victory in the election:

I witnessed at first hand the hysteria from the establishment trying to stop a Trump victory; trying to subvert democracy, the will of the people.

Even right wing Fox News anchor women were in meltdown, the rest of the liberal media were in mourning.

Do you see the parallels between our US cousins and the Brexit vote?

Next year there will be a seismic shift in European politics. Watch the same hysteria over Marine Le Pen, Geert Wilders and the Alternative fur Deutschland in Germany. And the same 'populist' parties (read: people are voting for us instead of the old parties) are seeing a surge in votes in Sweden, Denmark, Italy and in Hungary and Poland the populists have already taken control. You should see the hate and vitriolic outpourings from the EU elite.

Right and left politics is no longer relevant. Blue collar workers voted Trump, the first time since they voted for Reagan, another man who wasn't a politician and spoke their language.

So what now for that special relationship between the UK and the US?

On the night of the election I was in Trump Tower, in the apartment below Trump's, with one of his advisors and a number of supporters.

The advisor said that it will be the UK prime minister who will be first on the phone to congratulate Donald, won't it?

Of course, I replied, we now have a man in the White House who believes in that special relationship, not someone who told us to vote to stay in the EU and threatened us economically if we didn't.

However, disappointingly, that did not happen until two days after the election.

That is the most shocking part of all. British Conservatives always had a reciprocal relationship with the Republican party, yet Mrs May snubbed the president elect.

Let's hope he has a forgiving nature as we need to be at the front of the queue for a free trade agreement, not stalled because of her lack of diplomacy.

She should be clearing her diary and jumping on Airforce May straight out to the US to repair the damage.

One of the big issues in the election was immigration.

I had official meetings with the vice president of the National Border Control Patrol Council who was excited by the prospect of a Trump presidency.

Whilst the liberal left wring their hands about the 10 million illegal immigrants (and we thought we had problems), I was told the true figure is double that.

That's 20m jobs, 20m people needing homes, most of them working illegally and not paying taxes.

Donald doesn't need to build a wall, he just needs a reinforced fence that is patrolled properly.

Brexit and The Donald have bolstered the working classes, they know they're not alone and more people will 'come out' in the forthcoming European elections to march to the populists' tune and I for one am having a post Brexit democracy ball.

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Commuters' shock at luxury train

By Neil Lancefield
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

COMMUTERS are normally just grateful to get a seat. But on Thursday morning dozens were treated to luxury when a rail firm swapped their regular carriages for a first class experience.

Travellers arriving in Ashford to catch the 7am London service found many offered an upgrade by Southeastern and got to ride in a vintage Belmond British Pullman train on platform six.

Travel firm Belmond said it laid on the service to remind people "just how wonderful train travel can be".

After taking their seats in the spacious carriages, some of which date back to the 1920s, the passengers were served a three-course breakfast and entertained by a vocal harmony group.

The train, the sister of the Venice Simplon-Orient Express, is normally used to whisk leisure travellers away on trips to historic cities, major sporting fixtures and special events, such as afternoon tea hosted by TV's Mary Berry.

But Belmond chartered it to treat commuters on a 90-minute journey passing through Charing, Maidstone, Otford and Swanley to London Victoria.

There was a lively atmosphere on board as passengers made the most of the experience, with conditions vastly different from those on many regular rush-hour services.

DIFFERENCE: Travellers are normally more used to cramped conditions - but on Thursday they got a surprise

Latest Department for Transport figures show that 30 per cent of travellers were forced to stand because there were not enough seats on trains in and out of Victoria during the morning rush-hour on a typical autumn weekday last year – up from 25 per cent in 2011.

The travellers who took the special train from Ashford International were a combination of people recruited on the day and those who had registered for a surprise journey after seeing a social media campaign run by Belmond.

Tamsin Crook, 41, was among those who arrived at Ashford expecting to catch her usual train to work.

"I turn up every day, stand in the same spot and wait for the same train," she said.

"The standard experience is fight for a seat and then put your head down and read. Here it's like something out of an amazing film. It's opulent. It feels like we're going on holiday, not to work."

She added: "It's a once-in-a-lifetime chance."

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The market is held on the Cedar Lawn overlooking the castle and offers seasonal gifts, toys, decorations, specialist food and drink and the chance for visitors to meet the reindeer and the castle's birds of prey.

In the centre of the market are nostalgic fairground attractions, children's rides and a daily programme of live musical entertainment. Take a ride on the Victorian carousel and the high flying 'chair-o-planes' or take a leisurely trip on the big wheel for a spectacular view of the castle. Small additional charges apply for the rides. The market is open 10am to 5pm on December 3/4, 10/11, 17/18 and 22/23.

In addition this year, from December 3 to January 2 there will be special Beatrix Potter-themed displays around the castle to delight young and old alike.

And don't worry if you don't win, tickets will be available on the day.

To be in with a chance of winning one of the sets of tickets up for grabs simply answer the following question.

Q. Which of the following was created by Beatrix Potter?

***A**. Tintin*
***B**. Peter Rabbit*
***C**. Asterix the Gaul*

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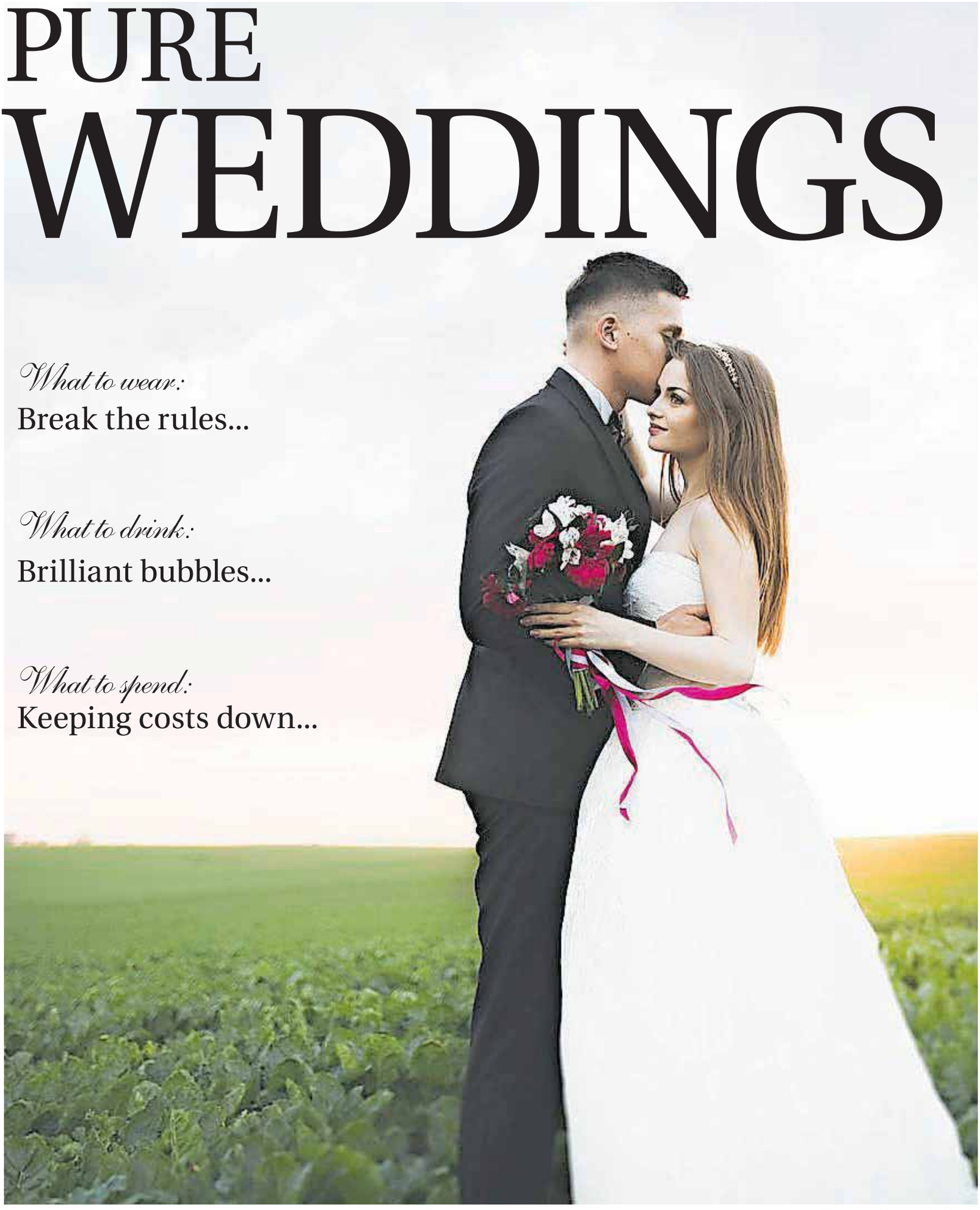

What to wear:
Break the rules...

What to drink:
Brilliant bubbles...

What to spend:
Keeping costs down...

Break the 'rules' and clash outfits

WHEN it comes to getting dressed up for a wedding, there are so many 'rules' to follow that most end up being a sea of men in boring grey suits and women in humdrum floral frocks.

But unless you're at an ultra-conservative church do, most of this so-called protocol is outdated, and actually, pushing the boundaries can pay off style-wise, helping you stand out from the play-it-safe crowd.

Here's how to (tastefully) break the rules this wedding season...

Be the black sheep

The rule: Don't wear black

If your everyday wardrobe consists of black, black and more black, don't think you have to abandon your go-to hue for someone else's big day – but remember that wearing it head-to-toe in a church is going to look decidedly funereal.

Instead, look for a dress that breaks up the expanse of black with a print or texture – lace is ideal – and add intensely coloured accessories to lift the look.

Or go for black alongside another bold colour, such as a bright pink or blue. This enables you to wear black and add a little bit more pizzazz to it.

Flash a little flesh

The rule: Never wear a crop top

The crucial word here is little: a V-neck halter crop top and mini skirt are going to attract stares for all the wrong reasons, but a tiny sliver of midriff is acceptable.

That sliver shouldn't include your belly button, however – pair high-waisted trousers, a pencil or full prom skirt (no shorter than knee-length) with a crop top in a structured fabric, like jacquard.

There are lots of matching co-ords in the shops at the moment that are the perfect proportions, thereby taking out the suitability guesswork.

Be red-y for anything

The rule: Don't wear red

Red used to signify vampish and vulgar, but as long as you don't turn up in a thigh-slit Jessica Rabbit-esque number, you needn't worry.

A pretty red lace or modern minimalist dress is totally wedding-appropriate, especially when teamed with more traditional floral footwear. It's all about balance.

Many brides are even using red as the colour for their bridesmaid dresses. So if it's acceptable for them, it should be acceptable for you.

Play your strong suit

The rule: It has to be a dress

'I've got to get a dress for a wedding', we so often whine, but why not use the occasion to step out of your comfort zone and try a suit?

Tailoring is having a huge fashion moment, so the shops are full of gorgeous floral and pastel two-pieces that you can jazz up with jewellery and heels.

The other advantage of a suit is that you'll get more post-wedding wear out of the separates, unlike the glitzy gowns that mostly hang

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unworn in our wardrobes for months (years, even) after the big day.

Wave the white flag

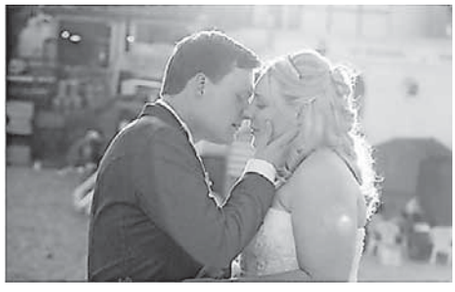
The rule: Don't wear white

It's the most contentious etiquette question of all: is it ever OK for a guest to wear white to a wedding?

Modern manners dictate that you can, but with caution.

The key is that it can't look bridal in any way, so steer well clear of frothy all-white looks, in favour of sharp modern cuts and prints.

Use the 50/50 rule (no more than half of the outfit should be white), and make sure you include a bright jacket or scarf in the mix.



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Sparkles to leave you bubbling over

TAKING a grand tour round the sparkling wine regions of the world will inevitably lead you to plenty of brilliant bubbles to pop along the way.

Here are some bright sparks from a cross section of our favourite styles...

Cava to count on: Offering fruity drinking pleasure that achieves a lovely balance between freshness and crisp acidity, Marques Del Norte Vintage Cava Brut 2014, Spain (£7, Asda) comes with the stamp of approval from the International Wine Challenge (IWC) where it won a silver medal. Dry, delicious and lots of fun.

New kiwi in town: If you love the delicate sweetness of prosecco and can't resist a glass of pinot grigio, then you'll be attracted to this fruity fizz made from pinot grigio grapes. Try Shorn Fizz, New Zealand (£8.75, Oddbins) which has pretty notes of pear and yellow apple and a refreshing, soft mousse.

Ace Apreitivo: TTD Prosecco Conegliano Superiore Brut 2015, Italy (£10, Sainsbury's) is one of the best own label proseccos and more than delivers with its appealing creamy mousse, honeysuckle notes and apricot and white peach flavours.

FRUITY: Try Shorn Fizz, New Zealand (£8.75, Oddbins) for a pear and apple flavour.

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Budget tips for the wedding day

MANY of us find ourselves saying, "I do" to a big bill after a season of weddings.

The cost of the big day can soon add up. Guests can expect to pay nearly £500, while bridesmaids and ushers can find themselves spending more than £1,000, according to research among 2,000 people.

Here are some tips from American Express to keep the cost down:

Personal touch: If your gift budget is limited, consider giving a present that has a personal touch. Video compilations or framed photo montages can be very meaningful.

Plan ahead: When gift lists are sent to guests, ensure you're one of the earlier purchasers. For those using registers, getting in early can mean picking and choosing reasonable gifts that suit your budget.

Get renting: It's always fun to have something new to wear for a wedding, but this can get expensive. Consider hiring a dress or suit for the weekend.

Use your tech: If you only need a ride from the station to the reception, consider using taxi apps instead of hiring a car. Don't forget to cut costs by car sharing with other guests.

PRICEY: Weddings can be expensive for not just the bride and groom but also their families, guests, and wedding party.

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BRIGHT: Festive decorations will be going up all across the county in the coming weeks

An essential guide to 2016's Christmas lights switch ons

X Factor stars, and panto favourites are just some of the celebs switching on...

CHRISTMAS light switch ons herald the festive season and what better way to start your celebrations than to watch your local lights turn on.

This guide tells you who will be turning the lights on near you, and when:

In **Tonbridge** stars from the Angel Centre pantomime Cinderella will be switching on the lights on November 25. There will be music until 6pm followed by a firework finale over the castle.

The mayor of **Sevenoaks**, Cllr Stephen Arnold will turn on the lights on November 25 from 6pm. Following this there will be carol singing with pantomime stars, before Frozen's Elsa and Olaf sing and perform.

Scrat from Ice Age will switch the Christmas lights on in **Gillingham** from 3.45pm on November 25. Enjoy the family entertainment with Heart's Becky Ives. There will also be choir singing, competitions and prizes, and dance groups.

The Gruffalo will take to the stage in **Rainham** to turn the lights on from 3.45pm on December 2. Enjoy the family entertainment in the form of choir singing, competitions and prizes, and dance groups with Heart's James Hemming.

The mayor of **Tenterden**, Cllr Pamela Smith will switch on the lights on November 26 from 3.30pm. There will be mulled wine available to purchase at the Tenterden Rotary Club stall outside the Town Hall.

Representatives from the parade, chosen by a draw will be doing the switching on honours this year in **Sandwich** on November 26 from 3pm. There will be festive stalls, music, and street entertainment as well as a lantern-lit parade around the town in early evening.

An annual Santa run will take place in **Sheerness** before the Christmas lights parade and switch on, on November 26 from 2pm.

Father Christmas will take to the stage in **Westerham** on November 24 from 6pm to turn the Christmas lights on. There will be a festive fare, street and food stalls, historic church's Festival of Christmas Trees, children's entertainment, and singing by Churchill School and Westerham Local Vocals.

The lights will turn on from November 20 between 12pm - 5pm in **West Malling**. There will be Santa's grotto, an ice rink, reindeer, and trampolines, as well as a children's balloon race.

In **Paddock Wood** pantomime stars and X Factor group Yes Lad will be switching the lights on, on November 27 from 2pm.

Dover's Christmas lights will turn on from December 3. There will be craft stalls, Christmas workshops, and an ice rink in the town. The switch on will take place at 5pm in the Market Square.

Ramsgate's lights will go on from November 27 at 4.30pm. There will be a Santa's Grotto, live entertainment, and a craft fair.

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Women Seeking

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CAROL, mid 50s lady, young at heart, attractive and sexy (so I'm told)! Give me a call if you are a gent with GSOH. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424783**

JANE, young 41, very broad-minded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. **Tel: No: 0906 515 3008 Box: 409715**

JACKIE, 56yrs, attractive lady who is lots of fun seeks like-minded gent for nights in, days out and much much more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424491**

KERRY, 35yrs, married in open relationship, attractive, tall, slim and very presentable. Seeks discreet gent any age for casual pleasurable encounters. **Tel: 0906 515 3040 Box 422363**

SARAH, mature feminine lady, kind caring but still has a sensual side, hoping to meet like minded, confident, non smoking gent with GSOH, looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424777**

ATTRACTIVE lady, brunette, 70, slim, sophisticated, size 10, kind of like Helen Mirren as a brunette, lives near Tunbridge Wells, WLTM a genuine, hopefully family oriented gentleman, for genuine friendship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424877**

KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+ Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3000 Box 419673**

JEAN, mature lady, genuine with many hobbies, slim, blonde and attractive. WLTM interesting gent with GSOH, must be cheerful, looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424675**

HI GENTS, I'm Kelly, a down to earth lady, 35yrs, shapely brunette, seeking someone with GSOH, looks unimportant, any age. ACA, I promise! **Tel: 0906 515 3024 Box 423035**

SUE, outgoing lady, enjoys life, likes meals, holidays, WLTM mature gentleman to share interests and spend quality time together. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424669**

TARA, 35yrs, own business, well educated dark haired curvy lady. Independent with no ties seeks "normal" chap for mutual pleasure. **Tel: 0906 515 3032 Box 424385**

HELEN, mid 50s naughty lady seeks some fun times with gent any age. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424493**

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. **Tel: 0906 515 3016 Box: 413399**

MARY, professional mature lady, loves life, very sociable and fun, seeks gent for good conversation and happy times. All calls and texts answered. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424775**

EMILY, mature well educated lady, blonde and smart and broadminded seeks gent any age for no strings fun. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3020 Box 421375**

NAUGHTY curvy 46yr old lady, outgoing and bubbly with a naughty side and lots of banter, WLTM chap 30+. If you are married even better. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3012 Box 424543**

CLARE, 41, attractive, lovely eyes, nice figure, smoker, likes beach walks, socialising, occasional gigs, WLTM a nice gent, any age over 40, for wining and dining, to be my soul mate. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424595**

SANDRA, smart, sophisticated lady, young looking 60s, genuine and kind, seeks gent with GSOH, looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424671**

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PRESENTABLE divorced lady, young 60, many interests, animal lover, seeks outgoing, cheerful, honest, smart looking man, for cultural times. **Text only Mailbox: 5576629**

WENDY, 44yrs, dark haired beauty with blue eyes and a fab figure. WLTM gent any age, give me a call and I promise to call you back, or text/email. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424339**

MELANIE, 49yrs, varied interests, attractive, sensual lady seeks gent any age or status, call, see what happens. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424337**

CALLING all Gentlemen! I'm Janet a mature solvent stylish lady, I'm waiting for you to call me so we can wine/dine and have some good times ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424335**

CORRINE, genuine advertiser seeking adult fun, no time wasters pls. I will respond to all msgs. **Text Only. Mailbox: 4035196**

JULIE, 53yrs, tall slim dark haired lady, sociable and fun loving. New to the area so WLTM men friends for fun, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424497**

PHILIPPA, feminine open minded lady seeking adult fun, genuine responses only pls, no time-wasters. **Text Only: Mailbox: 4030610**

ANGELA, 48yrs, seeks male companion for nights out, dining, maybe more. ACA or text me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424495**

OCTAVIA, black seductress, 53yrs, waiting to meet you. Pls text me today. **Text Only. Mailbox: 4090520**

WIDOW, 62, short, looking for friendship at present, interested? Ha ha got to phone to find out more! Call Jan. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424195**

RETIRED lady, an outgoing person, enjoys life, likes meals out, holidays, WLTM someone to share interests with, and quality time. **Text only Mailbox: 555264**

NICE female looking for decent genuine male for friendship to start out with. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4710874**

HI I'm Angie, attractive petite mid 50s lady. I'm a very very active lady, with lots of interests. WLTM chap with GSOH, looks/age unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424333**

HELLO Gents, I'm a mature attractive interesting lady, with gorgeous eyes. I'm smart, sophisticated, love theatre and films. Give me a call or text me. Looks unimportant, must be kind. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424331**

Men Seeking

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MARTIN trustworthy, warm hearted, loving, reliable male, 45, 6ft, medium build, young at heart, GSOH, seeks female, 50-60 for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424681**

MARK 48, slim, fit, GSOH, looking for loyal partner for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424679**

CARING 55yr old male, widower, 6ft 3ins, WLTM lady, 40-55 for fun and laughter, maybe happy ever after. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424677**

COLIN, 56, 6ft, medium build, clean and tidy with a tidy beard, I'm after some TLC with no strings adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422359**

HELLO my name is Paul, 43, 5ft9, from Sittingbourne in Kent, looking for someone to have some fun with and see where it goes! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422905**

NICK, mature male, builder, tattoos, plenty of money, looking for discreet meets, no stings in the Kent area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424787**

RETIRED, intelligent, Broadstairs widower, GSOH, medium height and build, seeks slim lady for friendship and companionship initially. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424697**

59YR old male, likes country walks, pub lunches, seeks lady for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424685**

MALE 50 seeks mature, home loving lady, 60 plus who enjoys cosy nights in. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424683**

WIDOW, 70s, brown hair and eyes, likes walking, pub lunches, places of interest, good company and lots more, seeking a kind genuine male, a n/s, 70-80. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423359**

GENUINE lady, 67, slim, GSOH, caring, honest, active, likes most things in life, days out, countryside, animals, long walks, visiting interesting places, cooking and holidays, WLTM a caring, honest male with GSOH, 67-73, with similar interests. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423289**

LESLEY, 66, retired beauty therapist, blonde hair, blue eyes, size 14, likes going out, travelling, holidays, arts, looking for a nice guy, 57-67, would be great to get a reply. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424147**

SINGLE lady, 65, blonde, quiet nature, likes the outdoors, picnics, jiving, WLTM single gentleman for companionship and possible romance. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423411**

JOHN, 70, widower, lives in Broadstairs, Kent, slim, fit, active, young at heart, kind, caring and loving, likes country/beach walks, holidays, days out, theatre, eating out, music, animals, WLTM slim, attractive lady, to share interests and nice times together. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424043**

LIVELY old boy, OHAC, near sea in Folkestone, into red wine, garlic and Radio 3, seeks lady companion/lover, 58-68 yo. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422621**

GENTLEMAN, 76yrs old, clean-shaven with a good head of hair and a smart dresser, hoping to meet lady for friendship/relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423645**

VINCENT 48, 6ft, well built, seeks lady for fun nights in and out. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 377397**

ANDY, tall attractive male, looking for a naughty female, for fun with no strings attached. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424295**

MALE, 52, quiet nature, likes coastal walks, cinema, reading, WLTM lady for friendship and maybe romance. East Kent area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424211**

RICHARD, 64, n/s, from Kent, medium build, clean shaven, likes classic cars, days out, meals out, boot fares, most things, would like to meet a lady for company and to share each others interests. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424207**

DAVE genuine guy, 6ft, black hair, blue eyes, medium build, likes sports, gardening, music, seeks female with GSOH and genuine. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 388372**

HAPPY go lucky divorced man, 48, 6ft, well built, seeks gorgeous female to share love and laughs with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383719**

TONY black male, 58, 5ft6, med build, n/s, seeking a local mature fun loving female 40/75 in the Chatham/Gillingham area for discreet fun. **Text only Mailbox: 5459052**

BARRY 47, 6ft, well built, seeks female for wining, dining and fun times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 361787**

TALL single early 60's male looking for pure hearted lady for LTR. **Text only Mailbox: 5496781**

GARY 48, 6ft, well-built, dark hair, brown eyes, seeks passionate female for fun times in and out. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 387175**

MALE, widower, n/s, would love to meet buxom friendly lady, up to 70, for friendship at first, interests include all types of music, walking, quizzes. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422957**

HELLO my name is Paul, 43, 5ft9, from Sittingbourne in Kent, looking for someone to have some fun with and see where it goes! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422905**

LOCAL Sevenoaks man, seeks local lady for fun and friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417127**

BRIAN, 6ft3, fit, bit grey but genuine and kind, looking for a naughty female, for no strings adult fun, if you're interested please get back to me, ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423483**

MALE, 53, 5ft6, single, hardworking, looking for slim/small lady, 40-56. Maidstone, Kent. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423363**

OUTGOING male, seeking attractive female, likes sports, music, cinema and nights out. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414793**

ANDREW, 50, slim to medium build, lives in Ashford/Kent area, WLTM a women, 40-70, for discreet fun, would be great to hear from you so get back to find out more! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423271**

GARY, 53, caring, likes snooker, bowls, looking for a nice woman to meet and fall in love with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423145**

EDWARD, 77, looking for a companion South East area of Kent, for holidays, days out, social events, and lots more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423039**

WRITER, tall, slim, fit, natural dark hair, generous, seeks lady for erotic rendezvous, I will make it worth your while! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422777**

PHILLIP, 66, into farming and country life, looking for a loyal, genuine lady, someone I can trust, to go on holidays with and spend time together. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422699**

TONY, early 60s, 6ft, slim, fit, easy going, looking for no strings fun with a lady, age unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422643**

49YR old male, 6ft, well built, seeks female to wine/dine and have fun with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 390929**

SUGAR Daddy available! Mature, tall, slim, natural dark hair, seeks lady, age unimportant. Not afraid of commitment. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418889**

48YR old divorced male, 6ft, well built, seeks lady for fun and laughter. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 380789**

PAUL 52, seeks loving female for exciting times, meals out, weekends away, cosy nights in. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418077**

MIKE, 64, outgoing person, enjoys life, likes sport, cricket, nice meals out, holidays, WLTM someone to share interests and quality time. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422329**

HANDSOME male, mid 40s, dark hair, hazel eyes, wishes to meet appropriate female for fun, friendship and perhaps more, please get in touch if interested. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422587**

PAUL 49 5ft 8ins likes eating/nights in/out seeks loving female for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 404013**

Gay Seeking

Join our Gay online service ***FREE*** visit: ***localgaydate.co.uk***

WOULD Mick from Maidenhead get in touch with John from Northampton - lost your number. **Text only Mailbox: 4172093**

HI I'm Andrew, 5'9, slim longish hair WLTM men aged 55-80 for daytime fun. Bi-curio. Sittingbourne **Text only Mailbox: 5469911**

ALAN, 68, gay man seeking a man, 65-75, for fun and maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424885**

SIMON, 29yrs, gay curious, seeking older gent for new experiences, must be discreet as I live at home. **Text Only: Mailbox: 4196422**

Friends

FEMALE seeking genuine straight female for daytrips, out to meet socially for lunch/coffee. **Text only to Mailbox No:4748240**

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Theatre icon Marti Webb joins stage play La Cage Aux Folles

By Emily King
emily.king@archant.co.uk

AWARD-WINNING star Marti Webb will be joining the cast of La Cage Aux Folles, alongside the previously announced John Partridge and Adrian Zmed in Dartford.

Based on the 1973 French play of the same name by Jean Poiret, La Cage Aux Folles follows the story of Georges, the manager of a Saint Tropez nightclub, and his partner, Albin, a drag artiste and the club's star attraction.

They live an idyllic existence in the south of France but behind the curtains of this sparkling extravaganza, all may be about to change when Georges' son Jean-Michel announces his engagement to the daughter of a right-wing politician determined to close down the local colourful night-life. Drama and hilarity ensue when a meeting of the parents forces them to cover up their vibrant lifestyle.

TV star and recording artist Marti Webb will play Jacqueline, friend to Albin and Georges, and owner of the restaurant Chez Jacqueline.

Ms Webb has played leading roles in numerous West End and touring musicals including Evita, Godspell, Thoroughly Modern Millie, Blood Brothers, Oliver, Oklahoma, 42nd Street, and Half-a-Sixpence.

John Partridge will play the iconic role of Albin. Mr Partridge's theatre credits include the West End productions of A Chorus Line at the London Palladium, Cats, Starlight Express and Chicago. He is also well known for playing the Christian Clarke in BBC's EastEnders and as a judge on TV's Over The Rainbow.

Adrian Zmed will play Georges, partner of Albin and owner of the nightclub. Mr Zmed co-starred with William Shatner as Officer Vince Romano in the '80s hit TV show TJ Hooker, which ran for 90 episodes over 5 years, and for playing Johnny Nogerelli in the cult classic film Grease 2.

The score includes The Best of Times, Song on the Sand and the iconic I Am What I Am, which has been recorded by singing legends Gloria Gaynor, Shirley Bassey and Tony Bennett.

The show will be at The Orchard Theatre from May 9 to 13 2017.

For tickets or more information, visit orchardtheatre.co.uk.

EXTRAVAGANT: Ms Webb will take on the lead role of Jacqueline

Burt Bacharach celebration

BACK to Bacharach a celebration of Burt Bacharach's music is coming to Folkestone's Leas Cliff Hall on November 25.

A percentage of ticket sales go to Breast Cancer Now.

Visit, ticketmaster.co.uk.

Jackson Live experience

BEAT the winter blues with Jackson Live In Concert at Dartford's Orchard Theatre on December 1.

Now in its sixth year of touring, Jackson Live in Concert sees long-time fan Ben recreate the Michael Jackson experience.

For tickets, visit orchardtheatre.co.uk.

Santa's Christmas grotto

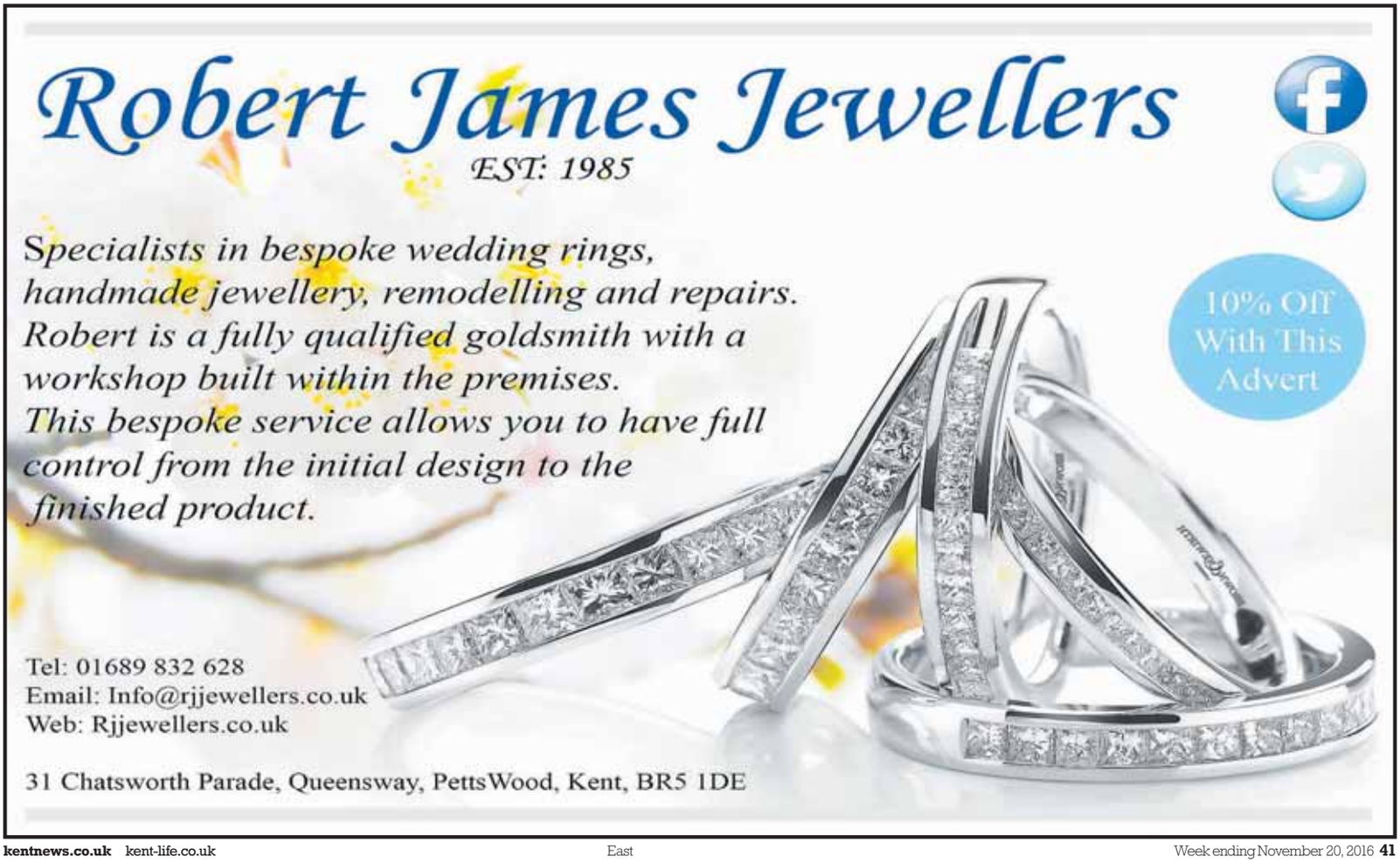
THE grotto at Broadway Shopping Centre runs every day until Christmas Eve, December 24. The entry fee is £5 per child and this includes, an elf makeover, elf passport, and a present from Santa.

Christmas ice skating

HEART Radio breakfast show presenters James Heming and Becky Ives opened the Tunbridge Wells Ice Rink on Friday.

The cost for one hour's skating, including hire of skating boots, will cost from £7 for children and £10.50 for adults.

For tickets, call 01892 554645.



Boogie Storm's charity gig

BRITAIN'S Got Talent dance troop, Boogie Storm are performing for charity, Stacey's Smiles, in Meopham's Nurstead Court on December 10.

For tickets, visit eventbrite.co.uk.

Christmas charity concert

THE Belvedere Concert Band is bringing the magic of Christmas to Dartford's Orchard Theatre on December 19.

The concert will benefit Age UK Bexley and Darent Valley Hospital charities.

For tickets or more information, visit orchardtheatre.co.uk.

The adult-only panto

PUSS and Dick, the adult panto will take place at Dartford's Orchard Theatre on January 29.

The pantomime will be full jokes and rudeness.

For tickets, visit orchardtheatre.co.uk.

Sleeping Beauty the ballet

THE story of Sleeping Beauty will be told via the Moscow State Ballet at Dartford's Orchard Theatre from January 10 to 11, 2017.

The tale has been performed for hundreds of years and is set to glorious music from Tchaikovsky.

For tickets, visit orchardtheatre.co.uk.

Winter Dreamland fun at Frosted Fairground

By Emily King
emily.king@archant.co.uk

DREAMLAND Margate transforms into The Frosted Fairground once again for Christmas 2016 weekends and holidays.

Guests will be able to enjoy performances from local school choirs and community groups as well as music on the bandstand, pop-up panto, carol singing, and Teddy and Betty's Christmas Show.

Visitors can head inside and experience Dreamland Undercover with a yuletide skate on the roller disco to those Christmas classics or chance their arm at one of the retro arcade machines to win those stocking fillers.

Rebecca Ellis, events and programming director at Dreamland said: "It's suitable for all ages and The Frosted Fairground will guarantee to get everyone in the festive spirit and spread the Christmas cheer."

In the midst of the Scenic Railway, guests will also be able to help the Elves get organised ahead of meeting Father Christmas.

Little ones can help Angus the Elf sort the coloured baubles in their correct jars, help Betty Bear mix the magic reindeer food, and as a treat they can take away their own bag of food to leave out for Christmas Eve.

With all the tasks completed, they will become honorary elves and as a reward, will step into the grotto and have their picture taken with Father Christmas. As well as this they will receive a traditional gift.

The grotto will be running from 1pm - 5pm for 10 - 15 minute slots, everyday of the Frosted Fairground.

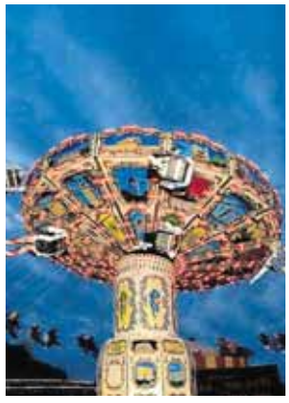
The fairground is open on from Saturday December 3 to January 2 2017 (not open Christmas Day).

There is a 10 per cent discount of all wristbands for the first two weekends in December.

In addition the first Dreamland Vintage Market will also be on December 3, and the Dreamland Tea Dance on December 11.

For tickets, visit dreamland.co.uk

SCENIC: There will be a grotto by the railway



FESTIVE: It's suitable for all ages and 'guarantees to spread cheer'

'Cooking with kids can be hell' says Wareing...

TV chef Marcus Wareing talks about his book Marcus At Home and cooking with his children

WHETHER you've watched him on MasterChef, Great British Menu, or in one of his three restaurants, it's a word you'd definitely use to describe him. And he wouldn't disagree.

"I am serious," says the 46-year-old. "I'm serious because I need to take my job seriously, and because there is a lot at stake. I take everything I do seriously, but I also now enjoy a lot more and am a little more open-minded."

It's perhaps this new, (slightly) more relaxed persona that has brought about his latest release, Marcus At Home, which is fit to burst with recipes that very normal folk can try their hand at. And it's all been inspired by family cooking.

"I love watching my family enjoy food that we've made together and my wife makes a brilliant lasagne," says the father-of-three, who's married to Jane, 45.

"I think now, because the children are more aware of food and are trying more, we as a family are starting to diverge into bigger flavours, spicier food, and just a lot more variety. The kids are not so young any more - they love their food and are growing up. It's really challenged me to do something I've never done before, which is focus on food at home."

Wareing - who describes himself as "driven, precise and friendly" - is a lot more easygoing than you might imagine. He's perfectly polished (his shirt is impeccably ironed and his beard is as neatly shaved as you'd expect his Parmesan to be), but calm and keen to put me at ease.

SERIOUS: Marcus Wareing

"When I think of 'home', it's all about the kitchen, the family, laughing and arguing," says the chef, who hails from Southport, but now resides in Wimbledon (he recommends a deli there called Bayley And Sage, if you're ever in the area, for the "best fresh fruit and produce").

And now the kids are growing up, cooking together is something that's happening more often.

It can be hell at times, but it is mostly fun," he says, eyes twinkling and a smile spreading across his face. "What annoys me about cooking with children - even though I do love it - is the mess.

Jess always wants to cook cakes, Archie will get involved in cookery with his mum and he makes a mean salad sandwich. But Jake is all about fry-ups, and he hates cleaning up."

Don't we all? Though I can imagine this is one Michelin-starred chef who won't stand for anyone not clearing up after themselves, even if they are his children.

Mr Wareing recommends three of the best... Foodie Advent calendars.

:: Paul Advent Calendar, £19.95, plus delivery

:: Hotel Chocolat The Advent Calendar - Caramel, £12.50

:: Biscuiteers Christmas Circus Advent Biscuit Tin, £48

That'll Be The Day

PREPARE yourself for a party as That'll Be The Day makes a visit to Dartford's Orchard Theatre on December 12.

The award-winning entertainment show, returns with its 2016 Christmas Show.

That'll Be The Day is all about nostalgia and live entertainment, reflecting the music and tone of an era that changed the course of music history and youth culture forever.

For tickets, visit orchardtheatre.co.uk

University concerts

THE autumn season of lunchtime concerts at the University of Kent in Canterbury culminates on December 7 with a performance by one of the most prominent sitar players and Indian music educators in the UK, Ustad Dharambir Singh.

In 2011, he was awarded an MBE for his services to music.

Admission is free, with a suggested donation of £3.

Free live music nights

THE Assembly Hall Theatre and The Forum have announced a collaboration to bring live music to the Tunbridge Wells ice rink in Calverley Grounds, each Thursday until December 15.

Performers will include Mike Wilton of the Standard Lamps, star of BBC Radio Kent Paul Cheese, and acclaimed brother/sister duo The Breretons.

Entrance to the music nights is free.

Swan Lake the ballet

MOSCOW City Ballet's production of Swan Lake will be performed at Dartford's Orchard Theatre from January 12 to 14.

The story of Prince Siegfried and his love for Odette who is tricked by the evil sorcerer Von Rothbart and his daughter Odile.

It will be performed beautifully to the familiar score by Tchaikovsky.

For tickets, visit orchardtheatre.co.uk.

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Your guide to meeting Santa this Christmas

Telling Santa your wish list for Christmas is the best way to start the festive season, so here is a selection of just some of the grottos to choose from...

Christmas comes to Bouverie Place

Santa comes to Folkestone and will take up residence in his log cabin on Saturday, November 26.

Come and see the 'old chap' for a contribution to charity.

He will be here between 10am-4pm every Saturday and Sunday as well as every day from December 19 to 23 inclusive and every child who leaves a letter for Santa, will get a reply.

There will be a whole host of elves entertaining kids queuing, so it's sure to be a great trip out for the entire family, adults too.

Don't forget, all contributions will go to charity ARRCC inspirational care services. You can read more about the charity here: www.arrcc.org/

Address: Bouverie Place Shopping Centre, 20 Alexandra Gardens, Folkestone, Kent, CT20 1AU.

Visit www.mybouverieplace.co.uk or call 01303 248102 for more information or to book tickets.

Santa's Grotto at Royal Victoria Place

Open every day from November 18 until Christmas Eve, let your little ones experience the true magic of Christmas with a visit to meet Santa at Royal Victoria Place.

Entry to Santa's grotto is only £5 per child including a luxury wrapped gift.

To capture the special moment, a photography service will also be available offering great gift ideas for family and friends.

Santa's grotto is located on level 1 of the shopping centre opposite Marks & Spencers, and will be open from 5pm until 8pm everyday.

It's advised to arrive early each day because every year there's a high demand for visits to Santa, who this year made his entrance to the shopping centre with some help from his Snow White pantomime friends, Sue Pollard and Jamie Rickers.

Address: Royal Victoria Place, Royal Tunbridge Wells, TN1 2SS.

Visit www.royalvictoriaplace.com or call 01892 514141 for more information and to book tickets.

The Reindeer Centre Christmas Grotto

Make your Christmas magical, for old and young alike, with your own special encounter with Father Christmas at the Reindeer Centre Christmas Grotto.

All children can meet real reindeer before they deliver the presents, and walk through our 150ft animated grotto with seven different scenes leading to Santa in his toy-filled grotto, with a special gift just for you.

You can watch Santa's elves all helping to make you Christmas special. Plus much more including meet our herd of reindeer, farm animals and reptiles.

Kids can also enjoy our bale ballpit, snowplay, elf funtime, bouncy castle, gift shop, and light refreshments.

Open daily from November 12 until December 24.

Address: Reindeer Centre, Bethersden, Ashford, Kent. TN26 3EQ.

Visit www.reindeercentre.co.uk or call 01233 820545 for more information or to book tickets.

The Three Horseshoes

Santa's grotto is coming to the Thee Horseshoes in Hernhill on December 22; bring the kids to see Santa and his elves for a fun and festive evening.

All children will receive a present from Santa and all visits are followed by carol singing and a tea party in the pub afterwards.

Spaces are limited and booking early is essential as last year was fully booked.

Tickets are £5 per child. Contact Buster or Charlotte for tickets.

The Three horseshoes will also be holding a range of live entertainment throughout December.

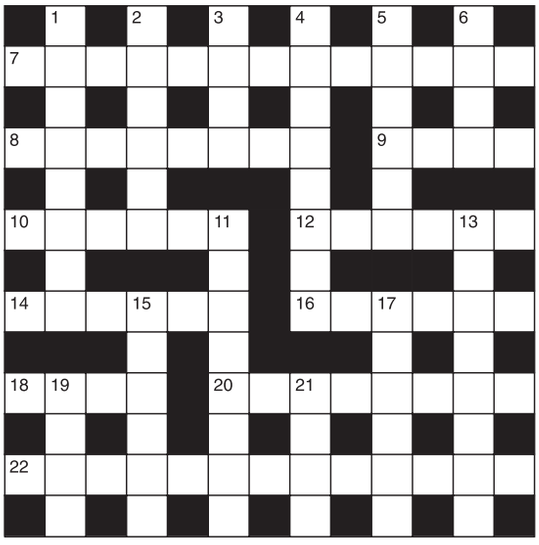
Kick Starting this year's festive events is the ever popular annual Christmas karaoke night on the December 3.

Address: Staple St, Hernhill, Faversham, ME13 9UA.

Call 01227 750842 for more information or to book tickets.

PUZZLES

DOUBLE CROSSWORD



Quick

Across

7. Sneaky (13)
8. Journalist (8)
9. Otherwise (4)
10. Impetus (6)
12. Untouched (6)
14. Hinder (6)
16. Bad-tempered (6)
18. Exhort (4)
20. Genuine (4,4)
22. Unfitting (13)

Down

1. Tepid (8)
2. Furrow (6)
3. Pimple (4)
4. Shrill (8)
5. Straight (6)
6. Ado (4)
11. Board again (2-6)
13. Avarice (8)
15. Not liable (6)
17. Inequitable (6)
19. Circle (4)
21. Pinches (4)

Cryptic

Across

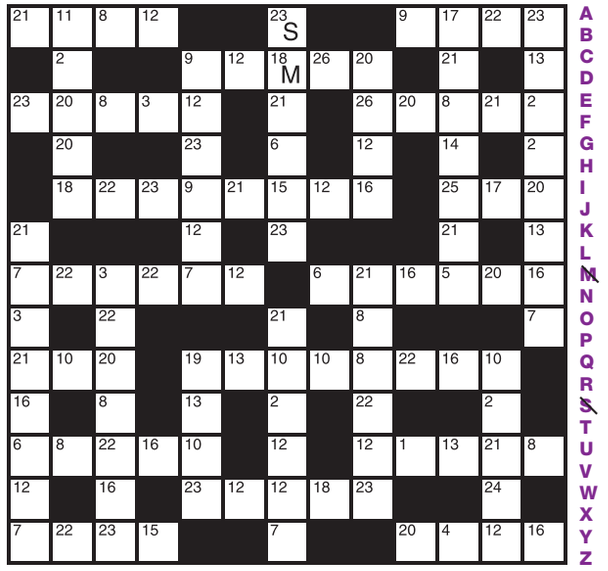
7. Understand inferior role, but be offended at it (4,2,3,4)
8. Help with odd brief at the finish (8)
9. Border on which nerves can be seen (4)
10. Strode round the county (6)
12. Single reduction impossible to repeat (3-3)
14. Saunter to take last half of coiled cake (6)
16. Number in a series of steps (6)
18. Concerning circle missing in border (4)
20. Tatty oil used in its entirety (8)
22. A noted place of learning (6,2,5)

Down

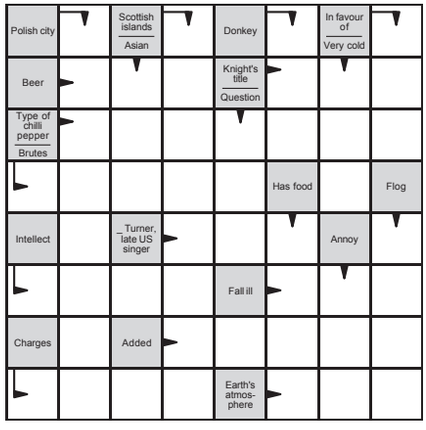
1. Reach the harbour to produce wine? (4,4)
2. Rubbish left by unruly brides (6)
3. As soon as 1 can include 100 (4)
4. Don't touch when the workers are away (5,3)
5. A bit each (6)
6. Boast lifted clothing (4)
11. Sneak gives story of Swiss legendary figure (8)
13. Immediate help needed for the injured if dart is wild (5,3)
15. Point out ring over choice (6)
17. Doctor of the polls (6)
19. Support defender (4)
21. How dandy makes cart into car (4)

CODEWORD

This puzzle has no clues. Instead, every number printed in the grid represents a letter, with the same number always representing the same letter.
For example, if 8 turns out to be a V, you can write in V wherever a square contains 8. Using your knowledge of words, complete the puzzle.



Arrowword

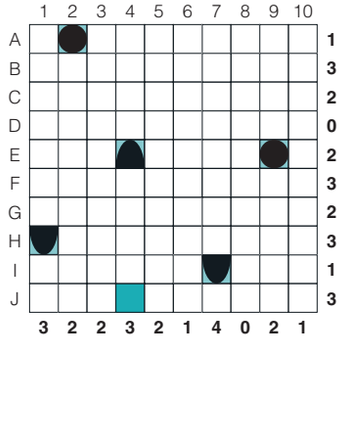


Enter your answers in the direction indicated by the arrows.

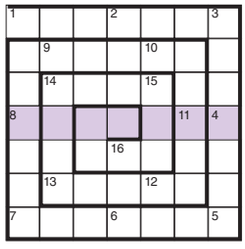
Battleships

Find where ships shown below are hidden in the grid. The numbers to the right of and below the grid indicate how many of the squares in that row are filled in with ships or parts of ships. The ships do not touch each other, even diagonally. Some of the squares have been filled to start you off.

THE FLEET
1 x Battleship
2 x Cruiser
3 x Destroyer
4 x Submarine



Word Spiral



Starting from 1, fill in the grid clockwise with four-letter words. The last letter of each word becomes the first letter of the next to reveal the key word in the shaded boxes.

1. Stylish
2. Ship's company
3. River dam
4. Housetop
5. Sustenance
6. Terrible fate
7. Untidy state
8. Strongbox
9. Facility
10. Gaelic
11. Revise
12. Sound a horn
13. Utensil
14. Connect
15. Court card
16. Precious metal

Keyword clue: An occupation

SUDOKU

Hard

					3	6	7	
4				9				
7	6							3
				3	9		6	
		8				5		
	1		2	5				
5							1	2
				4				9
	9	7	3					

Easy

9			1	6		8		3
	6		9				1	
7				5	8			
		4					5	6
		7		4		1	3	
5	1		7			2		
			4	2				5
	5				3		4	
3		9			5			7

Solutions

Arrowword

Battleships

Sudoku - Easy

9	2	5	1	6	4	8	7	3
4	6	8	9	3	7	5	1	2
7	3	1	2	5	8	4	6	9
2	8	4	3	9	1	7	5	6
6	9	7	5	4	2	1	3	8
5	1	3	7	8	6	2	9	4
1	7	6	4	2	9	3	8	5
8	5	2	6	7	3	9	4	1
3	4	9	8	1	5	6	2	7

Sudoku - Hard

8	2	9	4	1	3	6	7	5
4	5	1	3	7	9	6	2	8
7	6	1	5	8	2	4	9	3
2	7	5	8	3	9	1	6	4
9	3	8	1	6	4	5	2	7
6	1	4	2	5	7	9	3	8
5	4	6	9	7	8	3	1	2
3	8	2	6	4	1	7	5	9
1	9	7	3	2	5	8	4	6

Double Crossword

Cryptic
Across: 7 Take in bad part; 8 Befriend; 9 Edge; 10 Dorset; 12 One-off; 14 Stroll; 16 Figure; 18 Abut; 20 Totality; 22 School of music. Down: 1 Make port; 2 Debris; 3 Once; 4 Hands off; 5 Apiece; 6 Brag; 11 Tellitale; 13 First aid; 15 Option; 17 Gallup; 19 Back; 21 Toff.

Quick
Across: 7 Surreptitious; 8 Reporter; 9 Else; 10 Career; 12 Intact; 14 Impede; 16 Grumpy; 18 Urge; 20 Bona fide; 22 Inappropriate. Down: 1 Lukewarm; 2 Groove; 3 Spot; 4 Piercing; 5 Direct; 6 Fuss; 11 Re-embark; 13 Cuplidity; 15 Exempt; 17 Unfair; 19 Ring; 21 Nips.

Codeword
1=O, 2=R, 3=V, 4=X, 5=Y, 6=C, 7=D, 8=L, 9=T, 10=G, 11=B, 12=E, 13=U, 14=F, 15=K, 16=N, 17=H, 18=M, 19=J, 20=O, 21=A, 22=I, 23=S, 24=Z, 25=W, 26=P

Word Spiral
1 Chic; 2 Crew; 3 Weir; 4 Roof; 5 Food; 6 Doom; 7 Mess; 8 Safe; 9 Ease; 10 Erse; 11 Edit; 12 Toot; 13 Tool; 14 Link; 15 King; 16 Gold. **Keyword:** Soldier

It must be time to visit Barcelona

A new Barcelona hotel promises a central location at an affordable price - plus a plunge pool and champagne! **SUSAN GRIFFIN** finds out more.

Grey rain clouds looming ominously wouldn't normally present the ideal scenario for a short city break in Barcelona. But fortunately for us, they were merely part of the striking design of our room at Room Mate Anna hotel.

The Room Mate Hotels' brand was launched in 2005 by CEO Kike Sarasola after an unsatisfactory trip to New York with husband Carlos Marrero.

"We couldn't find a hotel in the centre...(so) we spent a lot of money on a hotel far away," he explains. So, he decided to open a new hotel chain, offering everything he wanted. "A hotel in a good location in the heart of the city, original and bold design, reasonable price, exceptional service and not flooded with extras..."

11 years on, there are 23 Room Mate hotels in cities including New York, Miami, Mexico City, Florence, Istanbul and Milan, with eight upcoming openings, including two more in Barcelona next year.

"Room Mate Hotels is for those who want to stay in the centre of a city, see the sights, walk the grand streets and breathe in the life and spirit of the place," says Sarasola.

Room Mate Anna, opened this summer, has 81 rooms. The airport bus, which takes about 35 minutes, terminates in the grand Placa de Catalunya, and it only took my boyfriend and me 10 minutes to get there along Passeig de Gracia, which is lined with cafes and designer stores.

We dropped our bags off and headed, via corridors adorned with fish-themed black wallpaper, for the rooftop plunge pool, enjoying a glass of bubbles on striped monochrome seating. There's a quiet sun terrace with beanbag beds; the perfect place to wind down after sightseeing.

And Barcelona is all about the sights. Buy a book of 10 travel tickets for 10 euros (there's a metro stop just outside the hotel) and travel to Gaudi's incredible Park Guell, and the whimsical amusement park on Tibidabo mountain, which can be reached via a funicular and offers glorious panoramic views.

Barcelona is made for walking though, and we enjoyed a 20-minute amble from the hotel to the Sagrada Familia, the staggering cathedral, yet to be completed 134 years after work commenced.

Afterwards we ate a three course meal at unassuming La Repanocha restaurant on Carrer del Bruc - paella, salmon, and a drink cost just under 10 euros each.

The afternoon was spent on the beach (the closest metro is Barceloneta), where we floated in the warm, clear sea and watched paddle boarders and canoeists.

Back at the hotel, it was wonderful to watch the sun set over Casa Batllo, Gaudi's fairy tale-like masterpiece, from our balcony.

For dinner, we avoided La Rambla, the city's pricey main avenue, and visited the cavernous Les Tapes on Placa Regomir where I enjoyed the most succulent chorizo I've ever tasted, for under 13 euros.

■ **Susan Griffin was a guest of Room Mate Anna (room-matehotels.com/en/anna/), where rooms start from 159 euros (£140 approx) per night.**

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Please include your name and address, although these will be withheld in exceptional circumstances, and a daytime phone number for verification (this will not be published). We reserve the right to edit all letters.

Why so much complaining?

GOODNESS me, the heads-in-the-sand brigade joined forces with the stick-in-the-muds in KoS last week. We had campaigners opposed to Otterpool – the proposed garden town; the naysayers against the closure of Maidstone Barracks, and the proposed hub at Southborough continuing to attract protests too.

What was missing, strangely, was the latest protest in the Manston Airport saga.

Perhaps they should all get together and build an aspic factory, but they would get up a protest against that too.

John Ward Moorhouse,
Tunbridge Wells

Blackadder has a cunning plan

I THINK we could evaluate our own attitudes to political correctness [KoS letters, last week] by considering how we feel about showing Blackadder on television during the remembrance weekend.

Showing a farce when the reality was so appalling could very legitimately offend, Personally, I can enjoy this comedy, despite the true events.

D Hedges,
Chatham

Voting. What is it good for exactly?

THE last comment of Malcolm Brockman's letter [KoS letters, last week] was "I ask myself is it worth voting for anything or anyone ever again".

It brings to mind Ken Livingstone once saying "if voting changed anything, it would be abolished".

S Reeves,
Herne Bay

LETTER OF THE WEEK

Trump win is dawn of a new world order

IT seems likely the election of Donald Trump, following on the heels of the British decision to leave the EU, means that 2016 will come to represent a watershed in world politics.

The ordinary people have rejected the selfish liberal establishment, which has ignored their concerns for so long, and made clear that they no longer wish to follow the path of unfettered globalisation and mass movements of peoples, which have resulted in a declining standard of living for the ordinary person, particularly the working class, while enriching those at the top of society.

There is now an opportunity for a restoration of the 'grand alliance' which won the Second World War to be re-established, not primarily this time to fight, but to put the interests of their nations before those of the internationalist elite, as represented by bodies such as the EU.

Although Mr Trump is flawed, and probably is not the one would choose to be the ideal champion of this cause, he recognises that the American people want major changes, while the UK outside the EU can turn back to our friends in the Commonwealth, an organisation whose economic future is much brighter than that of the declining EU.

As far as Russia, the other main component of the old alliance is concerned, we should cease to regard her as an inevitable opponent. We fought on her side against Napoleon, the Kaiser and Hitler and, as the outsiders of Europe, have far more in common with her than with many in the continental heartland. Together with the US and Russia we could ensure that those who wish us ill, such as Daesh, are defeated.

The politically correct, arrogant politicians have had their day and a brighter future, based on common-sense, and an appreciation of where the true interests of our people lie, beckons.

Colin Bullen
from Tonbridge

Discovering a truth about war

WHAT does remembrance mean? To remember those who died in conflict. To note sadly that many such deaths were a shocking waste of potential, with young lives given in wars with, often, slim justification.

For so many of us, it is also to remind ourselves; never again - the message carried on the banner of Veterans for Peace at the Cenotaph on November 11 this year.

But this last message of peace, of 'never again', is apparently not shared by the top management of Discovery Park.

The day after Remembrance Sunday, the Kent business park tweeted that it had attended the Sandwich remembrance ceremony. It used the hashtag #LestWeForget.

Have top brass at Discovery Park themselves already forgotten that they plan, in 2017, to profit from welcoming a new tenant, Instro Precision, which manufactures arms components and – public documents show – sells to human rights abusers and regimes, like Saudi, which wage illegal wars?

Have they forgotten that they already host a corporate tenant, Omega, which stages 'sniper symposiums' and other events for the arms industry? It seems that, whatever lessons Discovery Park draws from remembrance ceremonies, it is certainly not a message of peace and of 'never again'.

Patrick Foy,
East Kent Campaign Against the Arms Trade

Are we on edge of civil revolt?

EVERYDAY, more ordinary Britons are becoming convinced that a shadowy elite is pulling the strings at the heart of our government and that our so-called 'democratic right' is nothing but an elaborate hoax.

The command centre of our corrupt establishment clearly does not want us separated from the European Union or for Article 50 to ever be invoked and are prepared to use all methods at their disposal, however undemocratic or underhand, to get their own way.

Even the quietest, most reserved citizens in any society can only put up with so much blatant injustice before they express their profound discontent.

For Parliament to overrule and ignore the rule of the British people would be a catastrophic misjudgment. If the voting majority do not see their referendum result respected and Article 50 activated by the end of March 2017, I predict we will witness mass protest demonstrations on our streets unlike anything this country has ever experienced before.

Clive Wilkins-Oppler,
Petham

Lib Dems have no chance, Alan

ALAN Bullion [KoS, letters, last week] may well be right about Swanley Town's Council needing a change, and voters will get their chance at the next election.

He shouldn't hold his breath, though, that any of them will be Lib Dems.

Edward Baker,
Tunbridge Wells

Obligatory letter about Ray Duff

I FIND Ray Duff's persistence in ramming home his point of view unbelievably arrogant.

The pound was under pressure before Brexit and was over-valued anyway.

No, we haven't left the EU yet, but with regard to trade with countries outside the EU, we now have time to be prepared for the push to this end.

Time spent on reconnaissance and preparation is seldom wasted, Mr Duff. All your negativity cuts no ice with me. Britain is at its best with its back to the wall. Our stiff upper lips will outlive your soft flabby chin,

Don't you realise we lead the world in many activities? The arts, theatre, music, sports, making cars; they are all the envy of the world, albeit with overseas investment which exudes confidence. What about our inventions, computer programmers and inventors?

You finished your latest tirade, with a reference to Lord Sugar. May I point out he can be wrong, like you too, and it will be the remainers who will be told 'you're fired'.

John Gamet,
Walmer

KOS 10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

AS part of our commitment to providing the best service to you, we have produced our 10 guiding principles

Kent on Sunday will:

1) Be available in every postcode in Kent.
2) Be fair, accurate and balanced.
3) Be written in clear, concise English.
4) Not be overly sensational.
5) Have a sense of humour.
6) Have an easily understood division between news, comment and advertising.
7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
8) Highlight topical issues of concern to people living in the county.
9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.
10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.

We hope you enjoy Kent on Sunday.

images of kent

Ship moored in Swale estuary

by **Rebecca Shingleton from Acol**

To see your photograph printed, email **editorial@kosmedia.co.uk**,. Be sure to include your name, address and a contact telephone number. Unfortunately we cannot return any prints, and please do not send negatives.

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4 Star Madeira Carnival

By Air from Gatwick

22 February, 2017 • Quote: MC2-KOS

The Carnival of Madeira is known as one of the best in Europe. There are two main parades - the allegoric parade features thousands of participants in magnificent colourful costumes dancing to electrifying Samba music through the streets of the capital, Funchal. The second, called Trapalhao, features carnival goers in daring costumes and local caricatures. Included excursions take in the best of the island.

INCLUDED: Return flights Gatwick to Funchal with luggage • 7 nights stay at a 4-star hotel in Funchal • 7 breakfasts, 6 lunches and 7 dinners from the buffet, plus afternoon coffee and cake • Drinks included with lunch and dinner - aperitifs, local wine, beer, soft drinks and local spirits • Entertainment on 3 evenings • 2 half days and 1 full-day excursion • Seating for the carnival • Airport/hotel transfers in Madeira • Services of our representative in resort

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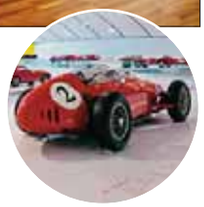


Live the Dream in Maranello

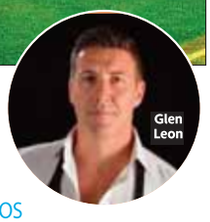
Escorted Holiday by Air

10 March, 2017 • Quote: FL3-KOS

Come with us to Maranello and Modena in Northern Italy - home to legendary Ferrari and Lamborghini sports cars. Our four-day break takes in all the sights of Maranello including The Ferrari Museum and the Fiorano Test Track. We will also visit the Enzo Ferrari and Lamborghini Museums in Modena. No trip to Maranello would be complete without taking a Ferrari out for a spin. Test drives are possible with a host of models to choose from.

INCLUDED: Escorted throughout abroad • 3 nights B&B sharing a twin/double room at the 4-star Maranello Village Hotel plus 1 dinner • Admissions to: The Ferrari Museum, The Enzo Ferrari Museum PLUS guided bus tour inside the Fiorino test-track proving grounds and Viale Enzo Ferrari and The Lamborghini Museums • Return Easyjet flights London Gatwick to Bologna - hand luggage included • All transfers abroad

60s Sounds in Surrey



Thatcher's Hotel, Guildford

6 Jan, 10 Feb, 10 Mar & 14 Apr, 2017 - Quote: TG-KOS

ENJOY a fun-packed party break at this charming Tudor-style hotel near Guildford and close to The Hogs Back Brewery and Polesden Lacey, an Edwardian country house and estate. Entertainment on 6 Jan 2017 is by Fortunes lead singer Eddie Mooney and Glen Leon as Tom Jones - £129pp; 10 Feb 2017 features The Beatle (Fab Four tribute) & comedy singer Ian Larkin – £139pp; 10 Mar 2017 with Roy Carter (ex-Drifters & Foundations) and Dave Grant (ex-Paper Lace) – £139pp;14 Apr 2017 (Easter) with the Frankie Valli Story & singing duo Bus Stop – £159pp.

INCLUDED: Entertainment both nights • 2 dinners and 2 breakfasts • 2 nights sharing an en-suite bedroom with TV, tea/coffee tray and free wifi • Free parking

Seaside 60s Sounds in West Sussex

Chatsworth Hotel, Worthing

31 March, 2017 • Quote: WG3-KOS

Join us in Worthing for an exclusive Party Weekend and enjoy £1 drinks and a 60s music tribute act each night. The Chatsworth is one of the finest hotels on the south coast, just a stone's throw from the sea and a short stroll to the town centre. All bedrooms are en-suite and a lift services all floors.

INCLUDED: Happy Hour £1 drinks from 7pm to 8pm both evenings - pint of house beer or small glass of wine • Live entertainment both nights • 2 nights sharing an en-suite bedroom with TV & free wifi • 2 dinners and 2 breakfasts

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driving

By Steve Loader
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

SPIDER WEB: there are clear design strands between the original 124 Spider (right) and the new car

'Nuova' 124 Spider works wonders

FIRST DRIVE: Retro road route yields a second winner for FIAT. First came the 500 supermini - now it's the 124 Spider...

NUMBERS plus nostalgia are working wonders for FIAT.

Having scored with its modern-day take on the classic 'Nuova' 500 (1957-75) small car, the Italian giant has taken the retro road again by re-creating the 124 Spider (1979-1982).

And pragmatically so, partnering with Mazda to re-work the Japanese marque's MX-5 – the world's best known roadster.

The result is two cars with their own distinct personalities, while sharing the best of the latest Mazda, and suggesting Ford boobed when it had a major holding in Mazda and owned Jaguar, yet failed to create a successor to the legendary E-Type.

FIAT's 'nuova' Spider (from £19,545) echoes the gorgeous lines of the Pininfarina-designed original and is more grown-up looking than the comparatively spiky MX-5.

Bonnet power bulges, a marginally bigger boot, plus smarter seats and trimming add to that feeling, though FIAT has sensibly carried over the Mazda's well-sorted dashboard and controls, and the bulletproof one-touch retractable roof.

The FIAT also feels less raw, with better sound-deadening and a suppler ride, but the powertrain is the major difference in driving: the MX-5's 1.5 and 2.0-litre engines are non-aspirated, while the Spider's is FIAT's acclaimed 1.4

turbo in 140PS (138bhp) as tested, and 170PS (168bhp) formats – the latter also powers a flagship Abarth 124 Spider, with uprated brakes and suspension.

The turbo gives the FIAT even better low end response than the 2.0-litre MX-5 and arguably the better drive, with less need to work the gearbox, while still benefitting from the host car's excellent balance and direct steering.

Our car was loaned by Northgate FIAT in Canterbury where brand sales manager Mike Dutto said: "Customers were excited well ahead of launch, with some ordering the car unseen and undriven. Some remember the original Spider, others just love the new car for itself – and competitive pricing."

» Read more of Steve's motoring reviews in…
KENT LIFE

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RX 450h prices start from £48,495. Model shown is RX 450h Luxury £51,495, excludes optional metallic paint at £645.

*4.4% APR Representative, £4,500 Finance Deposit Allowance, 42 months only on Lexus Connect (PCP), up to 35% deposit and Guaranteed Future Value/Optional Final Payment. RX new retail sales. Ordered and proposed for finance between 3 October 2016 and 14 December 2016, registered and financed by 31 March 2017 through Lexus Financial Services. Participating Lexus Centres. Other finance offers available but cannot be used in conjunction with this offer. Terms and conditions apply. 8,000 miles per annum, excess mileage charge applies over contracted miles, 14 pence per mile. Indemnities may be required. Finance subject to status, over 18s. Lexus Centres are independent of Lexus Financial Services. Lexus Financial Services is a trading name of Toyota Financial Services (UK) PLC. Registered Office: Great Burgh, Burgh Heath, Epsom, KT18 5UZ. Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

The MPG figures quoted are sourced from official EU-regulated test results. They are provided for comparability purposes, and may not reflect actual driving experience. RX 450h Luxury fuel consumption and CO_2 figures: urban 51.4 mpg (5.5 l/100km), extra-urban 51.4 mpg (5.5 l/100km), combined 51.4 mpg (5.5 l/100km), 127 g/km CO_2

Is this third time lucky for the X-Trail?

Having started it all, the Japanese marque wants the latest X-Trail to seal its reputation as THE brand for crossovers, writes Steve Loader...

NISSAN'S X-Trail was always a cut above 'soft-roader' rivals like the Toyota RAV4 and Honda CR-V, because it wasn't outclassed by a bit of rough terrain.

But generations one and two also had pugnacious looks to go with that role; the original even had footwells finished with flooring that could be hosed out if too much landscape came back on the soles of your wellies.

However, such Tonka Toy talent is wasted on urban-dwelling country set wannabes, so it's no surprise that the third-generation car is a more stylish beast likely to sell in greater numbers, while preserving some 4x4 off-road ability for those who truly need a bit of extra traction.

It's no accident either that Nissan, as the brand that invented the crossover with its original big-selling Qashqai and bug-eyed Juke baby brother, wants the X-trail to be big bro to both.

This X-Trail also offers 5-7 seats, so those who really must have room for seven now and again can do so for a not unreasonable £700 extra - allowing Nissan to dispense with the old seven-seat Qashqai +2's valuable slot on the brand's production lines.

In the modern way, the new X-Trail is available in both front-wheel drive (FWD) or 4x4 formats, the former catering for people who want high-riding SUV/crossover style plus economy.

The FWD option keeps prices sensible too: from £22,395 for the entry-level five-seat Visia petrol turbo variant. For those wanting 4x4, this starts at £25,945, which also looks good value against the opposition.

For now, engine choice is limited to Nissan's impressive 163PS (161bhp) 1.6-litre turbocharged DIG-T petrol unit with 145g/km of CO2 emissions or (starting at £24,145) a smooth 1.6-litre diesel in 130PS (128bhp) – as tested here - or 177PS (175bhp) format.

All models are economical with smooth and refined power and well-managed handling, the X-Trail being agile for a large and relatively tall car.

Nissan X-Trail 1.6 dCi 130 Tekna Xtronic (7-str)

Price:	from £32,175
Driving appeal:	★★★★
Image:	★★★★
Space:	★★★★★
Value:	★★★★★
Running costs:	★★★★
How green?:	★★★★
Best rival:	Hyundai Santa Fe

But it is the newcomer's crossover flexibility that wins most friends, with wide opening doors for easiest access, various passenger seating configurations and cargo loading options. A double load floor allows up to nine boot layouts, notably the creation of upper and lower areas with a single-handed move.

In its topmost position, the floorboard can hold up to 10 kilos of luggage, or 75 in its middle position. This solution enables the user to store, for example, a baby buggy and large items below while creating a fully usable upper load surface for smaller, lighter items or shopping.

Access to the luggage area has also been made easier with remote operation of the power tailgate, a classy touch that must further worry expensive German premium rivals, already concerned by the upmarket appeal of Nissan's smaller Qashqai.

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Fuel consumption figures for the new Fiat 124 Spider in mpg (l/100km): Urban 33.2 (8.5); Extra Urban 55.4 (5.1); Combined 44.1 (6.4). CO_2 emissions 148 g/km.
Fuel consumption and CO_2 figures based on standard EU tests for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results.

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Spencer Private Hospitals are two hospitals situated in East Kent. The larger of the two hospitals is a 22 bed independent hospital situated at the QEQM Hospital in Margate, whilst the second hospital is a 4 bed independent hospital based at the William Harvey Hospital in Ashford. Both hospitals have a reputation for providing excellent medical and surgical facilities supported by Specialist Consultants, Specialist Nurses and Physiotherapists. We have state of the art diagnostic equipment and exceptionally high standards of nursing care.

The continuing growth of our business has resulted in a vacancy for the following staff:

Staff Nurses X 3 – To cover our Ashford and Canterbury sites

Full time **Hours: 37.5 per week** **Closing date: Ongoing**

Salary: £23-25,000 per annum dependant on qualifications and experience

Qualifications and Experience

- Registered Nurse 1st level
- Evidence of continual professional development
- Experience in a surgical/medical environment with a knowledge and understanding of surgical/medical procedures
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills

To discuss these opportunities, or to arrange an informal visit, please contact: Gail Cribbens, Nurse Manager on 01233 651818

Theatre Staff – Various Roles Dependant on Experience

At Spencer Private Hospitals we recognise and value all of our staff and are committed to developing a well-trained and flexible workforce. As an Investors in People accredited organisation, you can expect:

- A generous holiday allowance, increasing with length of service
- Company contribution pension scheme
- Childcare vouchers
- My work offers scheme
- Family and friends discounts on Physiotherapy and Health Screening services
- Uniform provided
- Free onsite parking

We are also seeking self-employed Theatre staff for our Ashford site.

If you are adaptable and have relevant Theatre experience then we would very much like to hear from you. We can also offer an extensive training and competency program in conjunction with East Kent Hospitals University Foundation Trust Theatre department offering many specialities.

For job descriptions and application forms please visit our website: www.spencerprivatehospitals.com/careers

Alternatively, please contact Sarah Blaber, HR Assistant

Telephone: 01304 222690 E-mail: recruitment@spencerhospitals.com

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Spencer Private Hospitals is an equal opportunity employer. This position is subject to a Disclosure and Barring check.

Spencer PRIVATE HOSPITALS

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LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES

LICENSING ACT 2003
NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR A NEW PREMISES LICENCE

Notice is hereby given that Mr Vipul Patel has applied to Medway Borough Council for a new Premises license to:

For the off Sale of alcohol: Monday – Sunday 08:00am – 23:00, All Bank Holidays / Christmas Day / New Year's Eve / New Year's Day 08:00am – 23:00

For the premises **Frindsbury Newsagent**

Situated at **102 Frindsbury Road Strood Kent ME2 4JB**

Should you wish to make representations to the council it must be in writing and/or you can view my application by contacting the council on 01634 337107 or 337108 by **9th December 2016**

It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application. A person guilty of an offence under this section is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding £5,000.

Dated: 11th November 2016

s.17 Licensing Act 2003

Notice is hereby given that The Bow Window (Lenham) Ltd. has applied to Maidstone Borough Council on 15th November 2016 for the grant of a premises licence for The Bow Window, The Square, Lenham. ME17 2PG.

The proposed application is to permit;

The sale of alcohol (on and off the premises) 10:00hrs to 22:00hrs Monday to Sunday; Opening hours 06:00hrs to 22:30hrs Monday to Sunday.

Any person who wishes to make a representation in relation to this application must give notice in writing of his/her representation by 13th December 2016 stating the grounds for making said representation to: Licensing Partnership PO Box 182 Sevenoaks TN13 1GP.

The public register where applications are available to be viewed by members of the public can be accessed online by visiting www.sevenoaks.gov.uk and following the link to the public register.

The Licensing Authority must receive representations by the date given above. The Licensing Authority will have regard to any such representation in considering the application. It is an offence, under section 158 of the Licensing Act 2003, to knowingly or recklessly make a false statement in or in connection with an application for premises licence and the maximum fine on being convicted of such an offence is £5000.

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MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL
Notice of application for transfer of a Sex Establishment Licence pursuant to Schedule 3 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982

TAKE NOTICE that on 14th November 2016 Christopher Intrieri applied to Maidstone Borough Council for the transfer of a sex establishment licence in respect of Players Gentlemen's Club, 57, High Street, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1SY

DAYS AND HOURS OF OPERATION: Mondays to Sundays inclusive from 20.30 to 02.00 hours and on New Year's Eve – 20.30- 03.00

ACTIVITY: sexual entertainment venue

The application may be inspected at the offices of the Licensing Department, Maidstone Borough Council, Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone, ME15 6JQ

ANY PERSON wishing to make objections on the application shall do so in writing at the Council Offices to the Senior Licensing Officer, Maidstone Borough Council, c/o The Licensing Team, The Licensing Partnership, P O Box 182, Sevenoaks Kent TN13 1GP or by e-mail at licensing@maidstone.gov.uk. The grounds of the objection must be stated in general terms. The objection must be received by the Council no later than 12th December 2016

Name: Christopher Intrieri

Organisation: Players

Address: 57, High Street, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1SY

Date: 14th November 2016

highways england

M2 MOTORWAY (JUNCTIONS 6-7 NEAR FAVERSHAM) TEMPORARY TRAFFIC RESTRICTIONS

Notice is hereby given that Highways England Company Limited has made an Order on the M2 Motorway in the County of Kent under Sections 14(1)(a) and 14(1)(c) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 because works are proposed to be executed on the road.

The effect of the Order is to authorise the sequential overnight closure of:

i) the coast-bound carriageway of the motorway between Junction 6 (A251) and Junction 7 (A2/A299);
ii) the slip road leading from the coast-bound carriageway of the motorway at Junction 4 (Gillingham Interchange) (A278);
iii) the slip road leading to the coast-bound carriageway of the motorway at Junction 6 (A251); and
iv) the slip road leading from the coast-bound carriageway of the motorway at Junction 7 (A2/A299).

These measures are in the interests of road safety while contractors undertake lighting, electrical and signage works, road surfacing and all associated work, vegetation clearance, grass cutting, gully clearing, and litter picking.

The work is part of a larger A2/M2 project which is expected to last for approximately 13 weeks starting on or after Monday 28th November 2016. The overnight closures will take place between 20:00 and 05:00 (maximum period). Works will be phased to minimise the number of junctions affected at any one time. The estimated duration of each phase is 2 nights per closure.

The Order will come into force on 26 November 2016 and have a maximum duration of eighteen months.

Traffic affected by the closure in ii) above will be diverted using M2 Junction 5 and return. Traffic affected by the closures in i), iii) and iv) above will be diverted via the A251 and A2.

The closures and diversion routes will be clearly indicated by traffic signs when they are in operation during the works period.

M Taylor, an Official of Highways England Co. Ltd.
Ref: HE/SE/2016/A2-M2/164

Highways England Company Limited,
(Company No. 9346363). Registered Office: Bridge House, Walnut Tree Close, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 4LZ. A company registered in England and Wales.

For enquiries, please contact the Customer Contact Centre on 0300 123 5000 or info@highwaysengland.co.uk.
http://www.highways.gov.uk

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‘Good value’ Gills suffer FA Cup KO

Gillingham praised for ticket prices but beaten by Brackley

Football

By Chris Britcher
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

GILLINGHAM have been named one of the best value football clubs to watch in the Football League after a major report into the cost of attending games was published.

The BBC Price of Football report looked at the prices of all games down to the National League regional divisions to paint a picture of how much it costs to follow your favourite team.

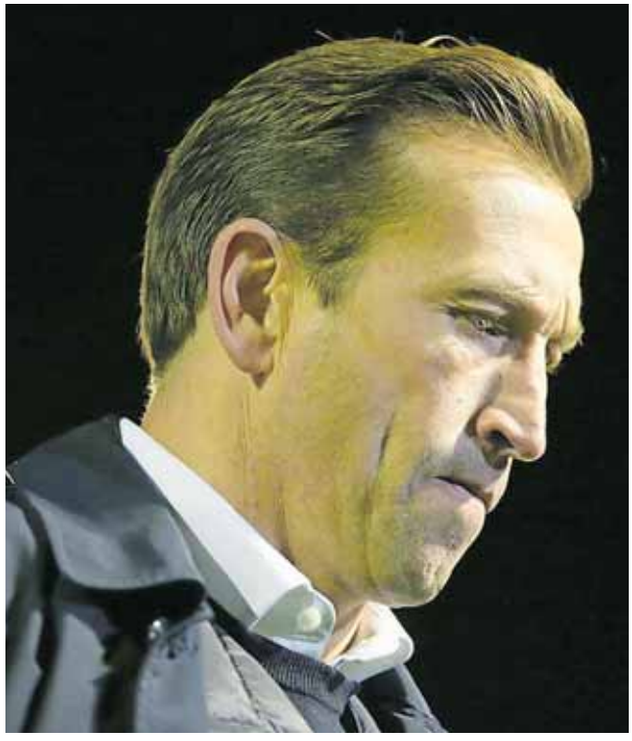
It revealed the cheapest match day ticket of £12 to watch the Gills in action at Priestfield was the cheapest in League One and that its £25 family tickets, which admit two adults and two under-18s into League One fixtures and is available for both home and away fans, is the best value ticket of its kind across the Premier League and EFL.

It calculated the cheapest cost of buying a ticket, cup of tea and pie was £20.80 - again the best value in League One.

Gillingham chairman Paul Scally said: “Community clubs like Gillingham are the heart and soul of football, the backbone of the English game.

“We are working hard to dispel the idea that professional football is a sport only accessible by watching television.

“I think our ticket prices are good value for money. Our pricing is always aimed at attracting new followers, and we engage with our supporters constantly to make the matchday experience as good as possible when they do come.”



DEJECTED: Gillingham boss Justin Edinburgh said he felt ‘‘totally let down’’ by his players in a humiliating cup defeat

It comes after history repeated itself when the Gills were knocked out of the FA Cup by non-league Brackley Town for the second time in three years.

Under-fire boss Justin Edinburgh said following the 4-3 defeat on Wednesday night: “It’s hugely disappointing but Brackley deserved to win; once again we were the creators of our own downfall.

“I don’t take any positives out of it whatsoever.

“There’s a lot to reflect upon and there’s a lot to ponder. I feel totally let down. It’s so, so frustrating.”

Hockey stars win Olympic team of year gong

Hockey

GREAT Britain’s all-conquering Olympic hockey team, featuring a number of stars from Kent, scooped a prestigious award this week.

Named Women’s Team of the Year at the Association of National Olympic Committees (ANOC) General Assembly, the gold medal-winning side featured county representatives Susannah Townsend, Nicola White, Shona McCallin, Maddie Hinch and Sam Quek.

The awards, held in Doha, celebrated and honoured the best sporting achievements from the Rio 2016 Games.

Hollie Webb, scorer of the winning penalty in the hockey final against defending champions, the Netherlands, said: “It has been an unbelievable year for us, returning home from Rio as Olympic champions and the first ever GB women’s hockey team to win Olympic gold was an amazing feeling and an achievement we are all incredibly proud of.”

KEEPER: Maddie Hinch is a regular with Kent side Holcombe

Sport Shorts

» Email **sports@kosmedia.co.uk** or call **Tom Pyman** on **01233653477**

Kent to appear in first overseas tournament

KENT will travel to the West Indies in the new year to compete in an overseas tournament for the first time.

The seven-times county champions accepted an invite to play in the Regional Super50, a one-day competition which begins in Antigua on January 24.

The Spitfires will face Under 19 world champions West Indies and senior sides from Trinidad and Tobago, Windward Islands and Leeward Islands in the group stages of the tournament which runs until February 18.

Kent Cricket CEO Jamie Clifford said: “It is a huge honour for Kent Cricket to be invited by the West Indies Cricket Board to join their domestic 50-over competition in early 2017.

“It will be the perfect opportunity to play competitive off-season cricket and good overseas experience for the players.

“We look forward to helping make the competition a big success and introducing the Spitfires to cricket supporters in the Caribbean.”

BOSS: CEO Jamie Clifford

HEADLINER: Unbeaten heavyweight Dave Jones, left

Professional boxing to finally land on island

NEXT year will see professional boxing roll into Sheppey for the first time, after a deal was struck to host a show at the Oasis Academy on the island.

Topping the bill on February 4 will be Queenborough’s unbeaten heavyweight Dave Jones, looking to build on his International Challenge belt won in June when he faces Paul Butlin.

Promising youngster Oli Edwards, 21, comes into his fifth fight after securing his first ever stoppage in just 24 seconds in Maidstone last month.

Finally, Tom Dallas will look to get back on track having been beaten in his recent comeback against Igor Mihaljevic - his first bout since fighting at Madison Square Garden 18 months ago.

Dover and Maidstone crash out

DOVER Athletic became the final Kent club to be knocked out of the FA Cup after they were beaten 4-2 by Cambridge after extra time at Crabble on Thursday night.

After Gillingham and Maidstone were defeated earlier in the week, Chris Kinnear’s side were the county’s last hope of a representative in the second round.

And they so nearly managed victory after taking the lead on 70 minutes through Ricky Miller, to set up what looked to be a big cup upset.

But Cambridge’s Mark Roberts struck in injury time to send the tie to extra time, where Aswad Thomas restored their lead just before the interval but three goals in quick succession shortly after from Leon Legge, Medy Elito and Ben Williamson proved too much.

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